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Cūḷa Sīha,nāda Sutta

The Lesser Discourse on the Lion-roar | M 11

Theme: Witnessing the true teaching and Buddhist missiology

Translated & annotated by Piya Tan ©2015

0 The Cūḷa Sīha,nāda Sutta: summary and highlights

0.1 THE LION-ROAR

0.1.1 What is a lion-roar?

0.1.1.1 The Cūḷa Sīha,nāda Sutta opens with the Buddha encouraging us to make a lion-roar, a public witness of faith that the true liberated saints (the arhats) are found only in the Buddha’s teaching [5.1.1]. The imagery of the lion-roar is based on the well known nature of the lion, as described here, in **the (Anicca) Sīha Sutta** (A 2.10):

3 “The lion, bhikshus, king of the beasts, in the evening emerges from his lair. Having emerged, he stretches himself, surveys the four quarters all around, roars his lion-roar thrice, and then leaves for his hunting-ground. [85]

4 Bhikshus, when the animals and creatures hear the roar of the lion, the king of the beasts, they, for the most part, are struck with fear, urgency¹ and trembling.²

Those that live in holes, enter their holes; the water-dwellers head into the waters; the forest-dwellers, seek the forests; winged birds resort to the skies.³

5 Bhikshus, those royal elephants bound by stout bonds, in the villages, market towns and capitals—they break and burst their bonds, and flee about in terror, voiding and peeing.

6 Bhikshus, so greatly powerful is the lion, the king of the beasts, amongst the animals and creatures, of great might and great majesty.” (S 22.78,3-6), SD 42.10

The Sutta then describes how the Buddha teaches the nature of the 5 aggregates—form, feeling, perception, formations and consciousness—especially their impermanence. This universal truth of impermanence encompasses both physical things as well as mental states (which is practically everything that exists or can exist).

Those who hold any kind of views based on eternalism—especially those of the immortal soul and the eternal God idea—are especially troubled by the Buddha’s teachings on impermanence, unsatisfactoriness and non-self. Like the fearful animals that run back to their respective habitats, those with such false views, frantically examine their doctrines and dogmas, figuring out ways on how to defend or revise them, or adopt and adapt teachings from outside. Those wiser will, of course, give up their wrong views and accept the truth of impermanence.

0.1.1.2 The Commentaries explain that **a lion-roar** (*sīha,nāda*) is an acclamation of the eldest (of beings) (*setṭha,nāda*, “the supreme roar”), of the fearless (*abhīta,nāda*),⁴ and one that cannot be countered (*appaṭināda*).⁵ Generally, it refers to any authentic teaching by the Buddha himself (as in **the Mahā**

¹ On “urgency” (*saṃvega*), usu (in human contexts), tr as “sense of urgency, spiritual urgency.” In the context here, that of animals, this emotion is that of fearful apprehension. See SD 9 (7f).

² *Ye hi keci bhikkhave tiracchāna,gatā pāṇā sīhassa mīga,rañño nadato saddaṃ suṇanti, yebhuyyena bhayaṃ saṃvegaṃ santāsaṃ āpajjanti.* The term “trembling” (*santāsa*) here might refer, amongst other things, to an intense feelings of “impending doom,” and also associated with drinking and drunkenness (delirium tremens or DT). Other symptoms are severe anxiety and feelings of imminent death.

³ *Bilāṃ bilāsayā pavisanti, dakaṃ dakāsayā pavisanti, vanāṃ vanāsayā pavisanti, ākāsaṃ pakkhino bhajanti.*

⁴ Fearlessness as moral courage is a vital quality in the spiritual life. On the Buddha’s fourfold intrepidities (*vesā-rajja*), see **Mahā Sīha,nāda S** (M 12,22-28/1:71 f), SD 49.1. Opp is “fear before an assembly” (*parisa,sārajja bhaya*): see **Saṅgaha bala S** (A 9.5), SD 2.21 (3.3).

⁵ MA 2:7,7+14 = AA 2:303; VbhA 398.

Sīha,nāda Sutta, M 12) or by his disciples (as in **the Cūḷa Sīha,nāda Sutta**, M 11), especially where such a teaching transforms us into better persons or awakens us to true reality.

In Buddhist teachings and narratives, the lion is presented as the noblest, even the wisest, of animals,⁶ always feared and respected by the other animals, whether wild or domesticated [0.1.1.2]. The Vibhaṅga Commentary says that just as the lion (*sīha*) is so called because of conquering (*sahana*)⁷ and because of striking down (*hanana*),⁸ so the Buddha is called a “lion” because of conquering the worldly conditions (*loka,dhamma*)⁹ and because of striking down of others’ (false) assertions. Just as the lion, with its powers, everywhere confident and fearless, roars his lion-roar, so, too, the Buddha is a lion, confident and fearless before the 8 assemblies¹⁰ on account of his tathagata powers, who roars his lion-roar, which is an elegant and efficacious way of teaching the Dharma. (VbhA 398)

For this reason, the Buddha is sometimes said to be a “lion of a man” or a “lion amongst men” (*nara,-sīha*; Skt *nara,simha*; literally “man-lion”).¹¹ The posture that the Buddha assumes when he sleeps—mindfully resting on his right side, with his right foot placed above his left—is called the “lion’s posture” (*sīh’āsana*; Skt *simh’āsana*).¹² The term *sīh’āsana* also refers to the Buddha’s seat, that is, the “lion-throne” (*sīh’āsana*).¹³ His gait is said to be that of a lion’s (*sīha,vikkanta*; Skt *simha,vikrānta*).¹⁴

0.1.1.3 The lion-roar is made not only by the Buddha, but also by his **disciples**, monastic or lay. It is a public declaration of our faith, understanding or attainment in the Buddha Dharma, and a show of fervent zeal in taking a courageous stand in proclaiming or defending the true teaching, especially in clarifying doubts or correcting wrong views.¹⁵

One of the best known examples of the lion-roar is a disciple’s declaration that he has attained arhat-hood, which is usually highlighted by the arhathood pericope.¹⁶ Often, such a disciple would announce his attainment to the Buddha, and the Buddha would praise him accordingly.¹⁷ Of the monks, the Buddha declares **Piṇḍola Bhāra,dvāja** to be the foremost of those who are lion-roarers (*sīha,nādī*). He is renowned for his invitation to those monks who have doubts about their own attainment of the path to come to him for clarification.¹⁸

The best known of the layman lion-roarers is **Citta the householder** (*citta gaha,pati*), a layman non-returner, declared by the Buddha as the foremost of Dharma-speakers amongst the laymen disciples (A 1:26). He often teaches the Dharma to the monks and is applauded for it (S 41.1, 5, 7). The suttas of **the Citta Saṃyutta** show him to be not only wise in the Dharma, but also as a man of delightful humour. For example, he meets the Jain teacher Nigaṇṭha Nātaputta, leads him into an embarrassing verbal trap, and ends up roaring the lion-roar that he is an accomplished dhyana-attainer through his own efforts.¹⁹ Indeed, Citta the householder is the model for an ideal lay disciple.²⁰

⁶ On the lion in Buddhist texts, see Deleanu 2000:105-112.

⁷ From *sahati* “to conquer, defeat, overcome” (M 1:33; S 4:157; Sn 942; Dh 335; It 84; J 1:74, 2:386, 3:423).

⁸ From *hanati*, “to kill” (D 1:123; A 4:92; Sn 125; Dh 405; “to destroy, remove” (Sn 118; Dh 72).

⁹ The 8 worldly conditions (*aṭṭha loka,dhamma*) are gain and loss, fame and ill-fame, blame and praise, and joy and pain: see **Loka,dhamma S 1+2** (A 8.5+6), SD 42.2+3.

¹⁰ The 8 assemblies (*aṭṭha parisa*) are those of kshatriyas, brahmins, householders, recluses, the 4 great kings, the 32 gods and the brahmas (D 16,3.21), SD 9.

¹¹ Kvu 554; Nett 188; ApA 94; J 1:89. Also *purisa,sīha* and *buddha,sīha* (BA 179).

¹² Tha 1095 @ SD 20.9 (modern comy); Ap 1:55.

¹³ Only in comys, eg DA 2:650.

¹⁴ Apparently only in Comys to Jātaka and to Buddha, varṇsa: J 1:119; BA 179, 210. **Nara,sīha Gāthā** (3rd cent BCE-5th cent CE) is a set of late Pali verses praising the Buddha’s 32 bodily marks: see SD 36.9 (3.2.2).

¹⁵ For further details, see SD 36.10 (3).

¹⁶ See eg D 9,56.3 @ SD 7.14, where see n on the full arhathood pericope for a list of refs.

¹⁷ See eg M 39,21.3 @ SD 10.13, see nn.

¹⁸ SD 27.6a (2.1).

¹⁹ **Nigaṇṭha Nāta,putta S** (S 41.8), SD 40a.7.

²⁰ See SD 8.6 (8.3) & SD 16.16 (1).

0.1.1.4 There is another dramatic occasion when the Buddha or his disciple challenges another teacher or someone proclaiming some false teaching. Many such interesting and informative debates are found in more than half of the suttas of the Dīgha Nikāya and many suttas of the Majjhima Nikāya.²¹ Scholars like Michael Witzel (1987) have documented the occurrences and nature of the *brahmodya* (Witzel 1987).

Scholar Joy Manné, in her survey of the various references to the lion-roar in the Pali texts, explains such occasions to be “utterances which the speaker is willing to defend in public,” reflecting “the Vedic tradition of challenges in debate.” Manné notes that, from the suttas, we can see that when the Buddha utters a lion-roar, it is often before “a larger public of the world,” but in those made by his disciples, they are “in front of the smaller public of the monks” (1996:32). She thinks that “the Buddhists have adapted the Vedic tradition of challenge in debate to their own purposes, using their own terminology—*sīhanāda*—and generalizing it to include a monk’s public assertion of his achievements.” (id).

If the Buddha has adopted such a literary form or religious tradition, he certainly has made a great success of it by way of natural adaptation.²² He effectively turns the brahminical verbal weapon against the brahmins themselves. This is especially evident in, for example, **the Ambaṭṭha Sutta** (D 3), where the arrogant young brahmin, Ambaṭṭha, is unable to respond to the Buddha’s lion-roar in the form of a reasonable question,” and is later sternly chided by his teacher Pokkhara,sāti for his impudence in challenging the Buddha.²³

0.1.1.5 Other scholars highlight the “**fear**” aspect of the lion-roar. Torkel Brekke, for example, explains that “the function of the Buddha in the simile of the lion is to create fear through his teaching ... and when this fear is effectively translated into religious motivation one will strive to attain nirvaṇa.” (1999: 450). This is, of course, an overstatement.

We may be motivated to turn to the Dharma from the fear of death or impermanence, or even reflect on the danger (*bhaya*)—a word often translated as “fear”—of sense-pleasures and worldliness, but these have to be a healthy kind of fear, just as a child, once burnt, dreads the fire. In other words, this is not a morbid or unwholesome fear, but a proper understanding of the disadvantages that such false views and negative emotions can hinder us from spiritual progress, or at least bring on unnecessary suffering.

Similarly Maria Heim notes that “the Tathagata delivering his teaching ... in exactly the same way that a lion’s roar causes brutes of the forest to quake in fear ... suggests that some fear is valuable, in that it can replace complacency with urgency.” (2003:546). It is true that the great saints, including the Buddha before his awakening, see the true reality of worldly existence—with all its impermanence, unsatisfactoriness and insubstantiality—with a profound sense of “urgency” (*samvega*). However, it is spiritual “confidence” (*pasāda*), which also has a sense of joyful relief or security, that the Bodhisattva sees the fourth sight, that of the renunciant, or the way out of the suffering that the Dharma gives us.

Then, there is the fear of those with eternalist views. Their fears are rooted in their insecurity and uncertainty in their own views of an abiding entity or external creator. It is not the Dharma that they fear, but rather the uneasiness that their beliefs and practices might actually be false.

It is like the sunshine that warms and lights up things. We may conventionally speak of the sun’s light causing a shadow behind an opaque object. The darkness is there because of the object’s opacity, that is, the obscuration of sunlight. The sunlight only reveals the true nature of the opaque object. Such correlations and conditions should not be misconstrued as the “causes” of fear, but rather are helpful conditions that let us clearly see the way out of such wrong views and false ways.

The point is that, in Buddhist training, while it is true that we must guard ourselves from falling back to the false views and false lives that we have left behind, but it is even more vital we should allow the truth and beauty of the spiritual life before us to draw us ever onwards to awakening and liberation.

²¹ See SD 21.3 (2.2.4).

²² See SD 39.3 (3.3.4).

²³ D 3/1:87-110 @ SD 21.3, see (1.1) for sutta summary.

0.1.2 Suttas dealing with the lion-roar

Here is a list of suttas and references that deal with the lion-roar:

Udumbarikā Sīha,nāda S	D 25,24.3	The Buddha's challenge to interfaith dialogue and spiritual openness	SD 1.4 (2.2)
Cakka,vatti Sīha,nāda S	D 26,3.2	The wheel-turner Daḷha,nemi gives up his kingship to renounce the world	SD 36.10 (3)
Cūḷa Sīha,nāda Sutta	M 11	The Buddha as <i>the</i> lion-roarer	SD 49.2
Māha Sīha,nāda Sutta	M 12	The disciples as lion-roarers	SD 49.1
Bakkula Sutta	M 124	Bakkula lives as a true saint without any extra support even from the laity	SD 3.15
Dhātu Vibhaṅga Sutta	M 140,33-34	Pukkusāti hears the Buddha's teaching for the first time and recognizes him as his teacher	SD 4.17
(Anicca) Sīha Sutta	S 22.78,7	Impermanence as the highest truth	SD 42.10
(Catukka) Sīha Sutta	A 4.33	Impermanence as the highest truth	SD 42.15
(Kamma) Mallikā Sutta	A 4.197,7-18	Mallikā courageously faces her karma by living virtuously in this life itself	SD 39.10
Nakula Sutta	A 6.16,2	Nakula,mātā declares her spirituality, calling on the Buddha to be her witness	SD 5.2
(Chakka) Sīha,nāda Sutta	A 6.64	The Buddha's 6 tathagata powers by which he makes his lion-roar (teaches the Dharma)	SD 81.4
(Dasaka) Sīha Sutta	A 10.21	The Buddha's 10 tathagata powers by which he makes his lion-roar (cf preceding)	SD 81.1
Piṇḍola Bhāra,dvāja	SD 27.6a (2.1)	The foremost of lion-roarers amongst monks, who clears doubts regarding the path [0.1.1.3]	
Vibhaṅga §§809-831	Vbh 335-344	Analyses of the Buddha's 10 powers of knowledge (<i>ñāṇa,bala</i> or <i>tathāgata,bala</i>)	

0.2 SUTTA SUMMARY. The Cūḷa Sīha,nāda Sutta, “the Lesser Discourse on the Lion-roar” (M 11) centres upon various unique qualities of the Buddha's teaching. Here is a summary of the Sutta, showing those aspects of early Buddhism—except for (4)—that are unique in the history of religion:

(1) The 4 kinds of recluses (noble saints)	[§2]	[1]
(2) The 4 qualities of dharmafarers of the path	[§3]	[2]
(3) The one goal of the Buddha Dharma	[§§4-5]	[3]
(4) The 2 extreme views: existence and non-existence	[§§6-8]	[4]
(5) The 4 kinds of clinging; fully understanding them	[§§9-12]	[5]
(6) How the Dharma-Vinaya is taught	[§§13-15]	[6]
(7) Dependent arising of the 4 kinds of clinging	[§§16-17]	[7]
(8) Arhathood and conclusion	[§18-19]	

We shall next examine the topics in each of these headings below.

1 The 4 kinds of recluses (noble saints)**1.1 NO “RECLUSES” OUTSIDE**

1.1.1 The Cūḷa Sīha,nāda Sutta opens with the Buddha declaring that the 4 kinds of recluses (*samaṇa*) [1.2] are found “only here” (*idh'eva*), that is, in the Buddha Dharma [§2]. “Empty of recluses are the other outside doctrines” (*suññā para-p,pavādā samaṇebhi aññe'ti*) [1.3]—this is **the lion-roar** [1.1.1] that we should make. In other words, this is the Buddha's call to us to bear witness—or at least, to work to understand—that these 4 kinds of saints or “recluses” [1.2] are found only in his teaching. The rest of the Sutta are instructions elaborating on this statement.

1.1.2 It is vital here to note that the Buddha refers to the 4 kinds of saints simply as “recluses” (*samaṇa*) [§2], that is, without any technical terms or some grand titles that we often see in the texts of later Buddhism. Here, the Buddha is highlighting and stressing the point that the “true recluses,” the true practitioners, are the 4 kinds of saints—the streamwinner, the once-returner, the non-returner, and the arhat. In other words, they are not “conventional” monastics or worldly priests, or titled clergy, or lineage “born-again” incarnations of some Bodhisattva or deity.

1.1.3 The conventional monastics are those who have renounced the world to work for awakening in this life itself. If they stray from this singular purpose of renunciation, and take up salaried jobs or, worse, get involved in commercial enterprises, or use money, then they are said to be “thieves” (*cora*) in the teaching, “who bring bad and suffering to the people.”²⁴ The same is said of renunciants who do not practise—they eat the country’s alms as thieves.²⁵

1.2 THE 4 KINDS OF RECLUSES. By “recluses” (*samaṇa*) here, the Buddha means the noble saints (*ariya*).²⁶ Such is the hallmark simplicity of early Buddhism, where the common word “recluse”—which is a term for renunciants in the Buddha’s time who have rejected Brahmanism wholesale²⁷—is used to refer to those practitioners who have attained the path of early Buddhism.

The suttas often define the saints in terms of their abandoning the mental fetters, those defilements that bind us to the cycle of life, death, and suffering. These are the **10 mental fetters** (*dasā saṃyojana*) and those broken by the 4 kinds of saints, namely:

The lower fetters (*oram, bhāgiya saṃyojana*):

- | | |
|------------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| (1) self-identity view | <i>sakkāya, diṭṭhi</i> |
| (2) spiritual doubt | <i>vicikicchā</i> |
| (3) attachment to rituals and vows | <i>sīla-b, bata, parāmāsa</i> |
| (4) sensual lust | <i>kāma, rāga</i> |
| (5) repulsion | <i>paṭigha</i> ²⁹ |

The higher fetters (*uddham, bhāgiya saṃyojana*):

- | | |
|----------------------------------|--------------------|
| (6) greed for form existence | <i>rūpa, rāga</i> |
| (7) greed for formless existence | <i>arūpa, rāga</i> |
| (8) conceit | <i>māna</i> |
| (9) restlessness | <i>uddhacca</i> |
| (10) ignorance | <i>avijjā</i> |

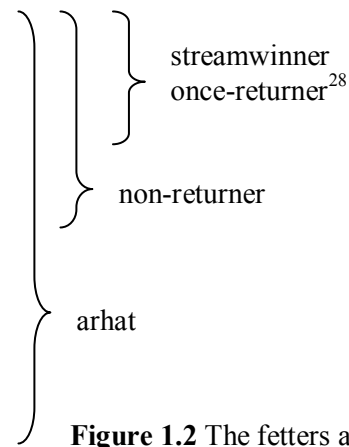


Figure 1.2 The fetters and saints

Teachings on these 10 fetters are listed in **the Oram, bhāgiya Sutta** (S 45.179) (on the 5 lower fetters), **the Uddham, bhāgiya Sutta** (S 45.180),³⁰ **the (Pañcaka) Oram, bhāgiya Sutta** (A 9.67),³¹ **the (Pañcaka) Uddham, bhāgiya Sutta** (A 9.70), and **the Vibhaṅga** (Vbh 377).³²

²⁴ *Evam jina, sāsanassa coro hutvā mahā, janassa ahitāya dukkhāya uppanno* (MA 2:305), Buddhaghosa’s comy on **Mahā Taṇha, saṅkhaya S** (M 38). A monastic who lives on alms, but does not practise renunciation is also said to be a thief (MA 5:32, SA 2:199). See also **(Arahatta) Susīma S** (S 12.70, 58/2:127), SD 16.8.

²⁵ See **Arahatta Susīma S** (S 12.70, 58), SD 16.8; also SD 45.18 (2.2.2.3).

²⁶ On the 4 kinds of saints (here called simply “recluses”), see also **Samāṇa-m-acala S 1** (A 4.87), SD 20.13 and **Samāṇa-m-acala S 2** (A 4.88), SD 20.14.

²⁷ The term *samaṇa* usually refers to a reform-inspired renunciant who rejects the mainstream brahmanical ideas (such as the eternal soul) and practices (esp the purification rituals). On recluses and brahmins, in terms of the Buddha’s religious background, see SD 25.1 (1).

²⁸ The once-returner (*sakadāgāmi*) has broken these 3 fetters and *also* diminished any action rooted in the 3 unwholesome roots (greed, hate and delusion). See below.

²⁹ In some sets, (5) (*paṭigha*) is replaced by “ill will” (*vyāpāda*).

³⁰ S 45.179 @ SD 98.11.

³¹ S 45.180 @ SD 98.12.

1.3 WHY THE 4 “RECLUSES” ARE UNIQUE TO EARLY BUDDHISM

1.3.1 Sainthood by spiritual awakening

1.3.1.1 In actual spiritual training, the first and foremost fetter that needs to be broken is that of “self-identity view” (*sakkāya, diṭṭhi*).³³ This is the wrong view that there is an abiding entity or eternal self—a belief that is upheld in Brahmanism and related teachings. Even today, in the market-place of religion and self-propelled preachers, we have to be diligent in identifying and rejecting any notion of eternal Buddhas and Bodhisattvas³⁴ that have crept or smuggled themselves into the Buddhist teachings.

1.3.1.2 Even common sense will tell us that everything in this universe is impermanent: whatever exists must exist in time, to exist is to change. If we claim that there is something abiding or eternal, such as time, then we are only speaking *metaphorically* (in an imaginative and conceptual way). If we claim that there is some kind of external agency (such as a creator-God or eternal soul), then this is purely an *imaginative* way of speaking, and can only be *believed* (not “known” as such, not in true reality); or that it is a dogma that must be enforced by faith and fiat or taught with theology and casuistry.³⁵

1.3.2 Sainthood—political versus spiritual

1.3.2.1 Unlike Roman Catholicism, there are no “canonized” or *official* saints in early Buddhism. The Buddhist saints are all self-realized “noble ones” (*ariya*). In other words, they are not *instituted* as saints, but become so on account of their own moral virtue, mental stillness, insight wisdom and spiritual awakening. In Catholicism, a candidate for sainthood was and is declared a saint by a kind of “screening” process,³⁶ presided by the Pope, who, interestingly, is himself neither a saint nor someone awakened.³⁷

The idea behind Church canonization is that the Church (or more exactly, the Pope and the curia)³⁸ will retain its supremacy and authority, and that sainthood works in its favour. In other words, such sainthood is based on rituals, belief and the supremacy of a worldly institution (the Church), not the transcending of all views and spiritual awakening.

1.3.2.2 In early Buddhism, one becomes a saint by at least “entering the stream,” that is, by breaking the 3 fetters of self-identity view, attachment to rituals and vows, and overcoming all doubts about awakening through self-reliance.³⁹ When such a **streamwinner** further strengthens himself spiritually by weakening the unwholesome roots of greed, hate and delusion, he goes on to become a **once-returner** (*saka-dāgāmī*)—with only one more life to go before attaining full awakening.

1.3.2.3 Once one breaks all the 5 lower fetters—the 3 fetters, plus sensual lust and repulsion [Fig 1.2]—one becomes a **non-returner** (*anāgāmī*). Then, breaking all the remaining fetters, the 5 higher fetters

³² On the 10 fetters, see **Kīṭa, giri S** (M 70), SD 11.1 (5.1); (**Sekha**) **Uddesa S** (A 4.85), SD 3.3 (2).

³³ This is the first and foremost of the 3 fetters (breaking which makes us streamwinners), ie, the first 3 of the 10 fetters (breaking which makes us arhats). On the 3 fetters, see **Emotional independence**, SD 40a.8.

³⁴ Early Buddhism uses *bodhisatta* (anglicized as “bodhisattva” (generic) or Bodhisattva (specific to the historical Buddha; may also refer to the Mahayana version). What is rejected here is the later ideas of Bodhisattvas as cosmic or eternal beings or who “postponed” their enlightenment.

³⁵ See **Is there a soul?** SD 2.16.

³⁶ Basically, there is first, the beatification (he is titled “Blessed”), and then canonization (he is called “Saint”)—all such processes conducted by the Pope himself.

³⁷ Since the time of one of the most powerful Popes, Innocent III (1160-1216), the Popes reserved for themselves the exclusive right to canonize saints. Innocent III was also the Pope who initiated the Albigensian Crusade (1209-1229), led by the leader of the Cistercian monks, Arnaud Amary, the abbot of Citeaux, successfully and terribly massacred some 20,000 gnostic Cathar men, women and children in Languedoc, France, in an “act of Christian charity.” See https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Albigensian_Crusade and related links. In modern times, the proper procedures for sainthood are contained in a Church document known as the Apostolic Constitution *Divinus Perfectionis Magister*, promulgated by Pope John Paul II in 1983. We need to be aware of such developments to have a better understanding of the history of religion, and not to commit the same mistakes or succumb to similar weaknesses.

³⁸ While in early Buddhism, terms such as *saṅgha* (which comes from the word meaning “herd,” as in a herd of cows, and were of natural origins, Catholic administrative terms and structure such as “curia” (the central administration governing the Church, ie, the Catholics) came from an ancient Roman imperial term for “assembly, council, court.”

³⁹ On breaking the the 3 fetters, see **Emotional independence**, SD 40a.8

—desire for rebirth in form world or the formless world, conceit, restlessness and ignorance—one becomes an **arhat**, one fully awakened, like the Buddha himself.⁴⁰ A list of the saints and the fetters they break are listed above [Fig 1.2].

1.3.3 According to the Buddha, if there were anything permanent or eternal, it would be found either in something physical (such as our body) or something mental (such as our mind). Our **body** basically comprises the 5 sense-faculties (the bases for “material form” or *rūpa*), all of which are impermanent. So we cannot speak of any or all of them, in any way, as being an eternal soul.⁴¹

The **mind**, on the other hand, basically comprises feeling, perception, formations and consciousness. All of these are also impermanent and conditioned. As such, none of them can be anything abiding or eternal, much less, any kind of immortal soul. It is meaningless to speak of an eternal soul that exists *outside* of the body or mind, because we then have no way of experiencing such an entity, and it would have no meaningful effect on us. All such ideas of an eternal agency or abiding entity are at best speculative, and at worst, are the bases for unhealthy views used for legitimizing our personal views and agenda.

1.3.4 “**Self-identity view**” (*sakkāya, diṭṭhi*)⁴² is the view—a false and harmful one—that we do not or cannot change in terms of our body or our mind, that is to say, that there is some kind of abiding entity or immortal self or soul in our body or mind (technically, in any or all of the 5 aggregates, or outside of it).⁴³ Once we understand or accept the fact that all things—physical or mental—are impermanent, we will then know and see them to be unsatisfactory.

Everything in this world is impermanent (*anicca*) and unsatisfactory (*dukkha*). What are impermanent and unsatisfactory have neither an abiding nature nor any eternal essence. They *have* no self; they *are* non-self (they have nothing to do with the abiding self, as such a thing is impossible). This is a natural and clear teaching that leaves us very little room, if any, for **doubt** (*vicikiccha*) regarding true reality. An important text, **the Anatta Lakkhaṇa Sutta** (S 22.59), gives us helpful instructions concerning these vital truths, and should be carefully studied and reflected on.⁴⁴

If everything is impermanent, unsatisfactory and non-self, it means that there is no abiding agent—something like a creator-God or some powerful being out there—who can really help us in understanding the true nature of life, an understanding that liberates us from craving and ignorance, from suffering. Since we need to understand such vital truths for ourselves, it means that the true answers must lie only within ourselves. We cannot rely on anything outside of ourselves, even through rituals and vows (which are ways of seeking outside help or salvation). Indeed, this is the only way to spiritual salvation—through self-reliance and self-realization.

1.3.5 None of these teachings on **the 3 universal characteristics** of impermanence, unsatisfactoriness and non-self, given in such a clear and complete manner, is found outside of early Buddhism. Those of us who even begin to understand these truths, and so understand and abandon the self-identity view will go on to “enter the stream,” that is, become **streamwinners** (*sotāpanna*), those who are assured of finding and walking the true path of awakening to true reality.

As we gradually break the fetters of craving and ignorance in their 10 forms [Fig 1.2], we evolve towards full awakening to know and see the true nature of reality, and so free ourselves from suffering. The awakening process begins with our attaining streamwinning, and evolves more fully through once-return and non-return to the full awakening of arhathood.

⁴⁰ However, if we aspire to **buddhahood** itself, we would need to meet a living Buddha, and make the aspiration before him, and then live countless lives as a bodhisattva (P *bodhisatta*), perfecting various qualities, and become an arhat in our last life. In early Buddhism, arhats do *not* need to become buddhas, as wrongly claimed by some later Buddhist sects. (Note that the term “buddha” is generic, while “Buddha” is specific, but may refer to our historical Gotama or the Mahayana Buddhas.)

⁴¹ On the nature of the physical body or matter, see **Rūpa**, SD 17.2a.

⁴² On **self-identity view** as the 1st of the 10 fetters, see **Emotional independence**, SD 40a.8 (3).

⁴³ The **5 aggregates** (*pañca-k, khandha*), as we have noted [1.3.4] are form (our physical body), feeling, perception, formations, and consciousness. See SD 17.

⁴⁴ S 22.59/3:66-68 (SD 1.2).

Hence, the Buddha declares that the 4 kinds of recluses or saints are not found outside of “this” teaching, that is, early Buddhism, the Buddha Dharma. Conversely, there is no awakening outside, in those systems that do not have these 4 recluses or teachings to attain these states. It must also be emphasized that those who reject or demean the 4 recluses—such as some of the later Buddhist sects and sutras—such as claiming that “arhats still need to become Buddhas,” they, too, are empty of the 4 recluses. Those vehicles that are empty of the 4 recluses do not move on the path to awakening.

Views are learning tools and provisional concepts. They should not limit us from discovering more about ourself and true reality. Our spiritual journey will give us many beautiful views of the world, but as we move on, we will discover that the views get even better. This is an inward journey of self-discovery where we learn about the nature of awakening in all its liberating aspects. This is what we next turn to.

2 The 4 qualities of a dharmafarer

2.1 THE 4 QUALITIES. If, after making such a lion-roar [0.1], we (the “monks” in the Sutta represents us)⁴⁵ should be asked by other recluses (that is, by non-Buddhists or those who reject the arhats)⁴⁶ for the reason for such a proclamation, the Cūḷa Sīhanāda Sutta says that, in reply, we should point out the dharmafarers’⁴⁷ 4 qualities as the bases for our lion-roar, that is,

- | | |
|---|---|
| (1) we have confidence [faith] ⁴⁸ in our teacher; | <i>atthi kho no āvuso satthari pasādo</i> |
| (2) we have confidence in the Dharma; | <i>atthi dhamme pasādo</i> |
| (3) we have fulfilled moral virtue; and | <i>atthi sīlesu paripūra, kārītā</i> |
| (4) our fellow dharmafarers, ⁴⁹ both householders and renunciants, are dear and agreeable. ⁵⁰ | <i>saha, dhammikā kho pana piyā manāpā gahaṭṭhā c’eva pabbajitā ca</i> [§3] |

The Sutta Commentary says that these 4 qualities are an allusion to the 4 limbs of streamwinning.⁵¹ On this comment, the basis for the above lion-roar would be **personal verification** through the attainment of streamwinning. Hence, it is a matter of personal experience and testimony that the stages of awakening can be realized through our practice of the Buddha’s teaching.

⁴⁵ On “the monks” or voc “bhikkhus” in the Suttas representing Dharma practitioners, see SD 46.18 (2.1.3.2). See also SD 13.1 (3.1.1): on “monks” as addressing meditators.

⁴⁶ “Those who reject the arhats” refers to “Buddhists” who claim that arhats still need to practise to become Buddhas: see eg reflection

⁴⁷ The word “dharmafarer” in lower case here refers to the saints of the path, while “Dharmafarer” is a broader term referring to both saints and unawakened practitioners, or to only the unawakened practitioners.

⁴⁸ Here *pasāda* is a more general word (incl a secular sense) for faith (*saddhā*). Faith—viz, wise faith (*avecca-p, pasāda*) (note use of *pasāda* here—is the first of the 5 spiritual faculties, *pañc’indriya*): see **Pañc’indriya**, SD 10.4 esp (2.2)

⁴⁹ Here *saha, dhammikā* (pl) refers to people, which Comy lists as monks (*bhikkhu*), nuns (*bhikkhunī*), probationers (*sikkhamānā*), male novices (*sāmaṇera*), female novices (*sāmaṇerī*), male disciples (*upāsaka*) and female disciples (*upāsikā*). They are “fellow dharmafarers” (*saha, dhamma. carino*), following the same Dharma (*eka, dhamma*), and who are streamwinners, once-returners and non-returners [interestingly, arhats are not mentioned here]. Hence, they are said to be “the noble sangha, proper in practice” (*supaṭipanno sāvaka. saṅgho*) (MA 2:8 f). *Saha, dhammika* is def by Buddhaghosa as “he fares the Dharma, so he is *dhammika*” (*dhammam caratīti dhammiko*) (DA 1:237); “he fares with the Dharma; hence, he is *dhammika*; he harmoniously keeps to the path,” *dhammena caratīti dhammiko, nāyena samena vattatīti* (ib 249; ItA 1:77; SnA 2:449). “The Dharma exists for him,” *dhammo assa atthīti* (MA 3:309). In other words, it is a syn of *dhamma. cārī* (eg Dh 168 f). Note also that the lower case “dharmafarers” is used signifying a *natural* or *spiritual* community of saints, not an institution or some later Buddhist institutions.

⁵⁰ Ie, they are friendly to one another, “mixing like milk and water, looking at each other with kindly eyes ... smiling and cheerful ... their faculties clear,” and also to outsiders: see **Dhamma, cetiya S** (M 89, 11/1:120 f), SD 64.10; also SD 8.1 (6).

⁵¹ MA 2:9,5. The standard description of the 4 limbs of streamwinning (eg, S 55.1/5:343,1) lists wise faith in the Buddha, the Dharma, and the sangha, together with unblemished moral conduct. Instead of wise faith in the sangha, M 11/1:64,13 only lists being pleasantly inclined towards fellow dharmafarers. MA 2:8,35 matches these two by explaining that these fellow dharmafarers should be understood to be noble disciples, as such, members of the noble sangha of saints.

2.2 THE 4 LIMBS OF STREAMWINNING

2.2.1 The Pali commentary explains this fourfold assertion to be an allusion to the 4 limbs of stream-winning (*sotāpannassa aṅgāni*) (MA 2:9,5). However, the limbs listed in the Cūḷa Sīha,nāda Sutta are not the standard set. The standard description of the 4 limbs of streamwinning—such as in **the Pañca Vera Bhaya Sutta 1** (S 12.41)—gives the following qualities (and also defines them):⁵²

- | | | |
|-------------------------------------|---|-------------------------------------|
| (1) wise faith in the Buddha, | <i>buddhe avecca-p,pasāda</i> | |
| (2) wise faith in the Dharma, | <i>dhamme avecca-p.pasāda</i> | |
| (3) wise faith in the Sangha, | <i>saṅghe avecca-p,passāda</i> | |
| (4) virtues dear to the noble ones. | <i>ariya,kantāni sīlāni</i> ⁵³ | (S 12.41,10-14/2:69 f), SD 3.3(4.2) |

2.2.2 The first two limbs refer to the same qualities: where the Cūḷa Sīha,nāda Sutta list uses only “confidence” (*pasāda*), the standard set uses “confidence through understanding,” or more simply, “wise faith” (*avecca-p,pasāda*). “Confidence,” *pasāda* and “faith,” *saddhā*, are practically synonyms, except that the former highlights its affective aspects of joy, radiance, serenity and satisfaction (on account of understanding). Hence, more fully, it is said to be *avecca-p,pasāda*. *Avecca*, “(with) wise understanding,” is an absolutive⁵⁴ resolved as *ava* (here connoting understanding) + *aveti*, “to penetrate (by way of understanding).”

2.2.3 While the Cūḷa Sīha,nāda Sutta lists the third quality as “fulfilled moral virtue” [§3.3], its counterpart in the better known set (such as the 4 limbs of a streamwinner)⁵⁵ is that of “wise faith in the sangha.” It is not difficult to understand that the noble sangha (*ariya,sangha*) is meant here, that is, those fully accomplished in moral virtue. Since the Sutta centres around the lion-roar to those outside the teaching, understandably, this quality is given as it is, rather than being identified with the holy community, with which outsiders are still unfamiliar.

2.2.4 The wording of the fourth limb is of special interest. Instead of wise faith in the sangha, as found in the standard set, the Sutta lists this quality as “our fellow dharmafarers, both householders and renunciants, are dear and agreeable” [§3.3]. The Commentary explains that the “fellow dharmafarers” (*saha,dhammika*) here should be understood to be noble disciples (*ariya,sāvaka*), that is, members of the noble sangha—those who are streamwinners, once-returns, non-returns and arhats (MA 2:8,35). In other words, the 4 kinds of recluses are highlighted (again), which are, after all, the Sutta theme.

2.2.5 Another important reason is evident from the Cūḷa Sīha,nāda Sutta itself [§4], where we are told that outside wanderers, too, may make the claim that they have these same 4 qualities. The Buddha then explains that the systems of the outside wanderers differ from the Buddhist in 9 ways. [§5; 3]

2.2.6 According to this commentarial explanation, then, the basis for the lion-roar would be **personal verification**—practising the teaching for ourselves and through our attaining at least streamwinning. The spiritual training is incomplete until we have at least attained streamwinning. Otherwise, as stated in **the**

⁵² *Sotāpannassa aṅgāni* (D 33,1.11(14)/3:227), ie the “limbs of a streamwinner” Cf *sot’āpatti-y-aṅga*, “the limbs (or factors) for streamwinning” above [1]. The two terms are sometimes interchangeable in the suttas, depending on the context: see SD 47.1 (2.1.1). On these terms, see SD 23.2b (1.3). For a shorter statement on the limbs of a streamwinner, see **Ogadha S** (S 55.2/5:343 f). For the streamwinner’s practice, see (**Agata,phala**) **Mahānāma S** (A 6.40/3:284-288), SD 15.3.

⁵³ “Virtues dear to the noble ones,” *ariya,kantāni sīlāni*. The noble one’s moral virtue is explained at Vism 7.101-106/221 f. SA says that the noble ones do not violate the 5 precepts; hence, this virtue is dear to them (SA 2:74).

⁵⁴ An absolutive or absolute is an adverbial clause that has its own subject, and has a participle as its verb or no verb at all, eg “*Having penetrated the problem*, he understood the teaching.” (The *italicized* is an absolute clause.) In the cpd *avecca-p,pasāda*, as a component, *avecca* effectively functions (in the English tr) as an adjective. See CPD, under *avecca*. On absolute construction, see A K Warder, *introduction to Pali*, 1974 (edn ed): 291.

⁵⁵ The 4 limbs of a streamwinner (*sotāpannassa aṅga*) are: faith in (1)-(3) the 3 jewels, and (4) being well accomplished in moral virtue. See (**Tad-ah’**) **Uposatha S** (A 3.70,4-7), SD 4.18; **Pañca Vera Bhaya S 1** (S 12.41,10-14), SD 3.3(4.2).

(Sotāpanna) Nandiya Sutta (S 55.40), we are still “outsiders” (*bāhira*) or worldlings, those who are still influenced by the world and worldliness.⁵⁶

Hence, we actually verify or stand as witnesses on our personal experience—we must “come and see” (*ehi,passika*)—that the stages of awakening can be attained through the teaching that we (or anyone) has properly followed. We may read all the books and materials on Buddhism, or master all the academic levels of Buddhist learning, or even listen to the greatest living teachers teaching the Dharma—if we have not tasted the Dharma for ourselves, we are still outsiders who need to move inwards towards awakening.

3 The one goal of the Buddha Dharma

3.1 THE UNIQUENESS OF THE BUDDHA DHARMA

3.1.0 In the next section [§4], we are told that outside wanderers, too, may make the claim that they have these same 4 qualities. The rest of the Sutta contains teachings by the Buddha on how the outside systems differ from the Buddha Dharma, and how it is unique as a teaching.

3.1.1 The Sutta mentions that the outside systems proclaim their own respective “one” goal (*niṭṭhā*) [§5.1]. The Sutta commentary glosses *niṭṭhā* (fem) as “what has become the culmination” (*pariyosāna, -bhūta*). It is a general term for the highest spiritual goal, or highest good, summum bonum. In other words, how are our lives fully transformed, or bettered in any way, as a result of the teaching and practice of a particular system?

3.1.2 Outside sectarians and religionists often claim that their goal, even belief, is “one.” The reality, however is that they each differ from one another: they have “many” (*puthu*), and differing values and destinies. For example, each system (even within the same religion) declares “arhathood” (a general term referring to religious perfection) as its goal, each actually has its own goal, according to its beliefs. Each religion or sect defines its saints in its own way, as a rule, differently from those of other systems.

3.1.3 God-beliefs

3.1.3.1 God-believers, like the brahmins, declare the brahma world (“heaven”) as their goal. The ascetics (*tāpasa*) declare their goal to be the heaven of the gods of streaming radiance (*ābhassarā*). The wanderers work for the heaven of the gods of radiant glory (*subha,kiṇhā*). And the Ajivikas (the naked ascetics) declare their goals as the non-conscious state (*asaññī,bhava*), which they regard as the “infinite mind” (*ananta,mānasa*). (MA 2:9 f)

3.1.3.2 Even today, we have major world religions claiming that there is “only one true God,” and each claim this to be *its* God. Common sense will tell us that they cannot be right. Indeed, when it comes to such an imaginative and insidious idea, without any empirical evidence, we must conclude that they are all wrong! Considering how much war, destruction and intolerance have occurred in God’s name, rightly or wrongly, this is the best conclusion we must come to for the good and happiness of the world and the future. This struggle to free ourselves of mind-controlling and dominating ideas, started centuries ago, and must continue so that we have a more humane future for true creativity and real goodness.

3.1.3.3 We often hear in God-religions about a powerful person or someone thinks he is above the law who has done something wrong or habitually does bad, believers would often resignedly say that what he has done is “between him and God” [4.3.5.3]. Take for example, the numerous cases of **sexual abuse of children and the young** that has been going on in the Catholic church for decades, even centuries, by priests and are abetted by powerful church figures.⁵⁷

This is often said by those who feel that they are powerless to do anything about the bad person. It becomes a way of condoning or side-stepping the real problem—that their teachings, beliefs, and prac-

⁵⁶ S 55.40,4/5:397 + SD 47.1 (1.1.2).

⁵⁷ See, for an overview: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Catholic_Church_sexual_abuse_cases & for reports by country: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Roman_Catholic_sex_abuse_cases_by_country. See also the award-winning *Spotlight*, a 2015 US biographical drama about the *Boston Globe* investigation of into cases of widespread and systemic child abuse in Boston by numerous Roman Catholic priests. It is based on a series of stories by the actual Spotlight Team that earned *The Globe* the 2003 Pulitzer Prize for Public Service. For details, see SD 64.17 (10), Sexual abuse in religion. For updates, search Wikipedia with the wildcard, “Church abuse.”

tices do not have any spiritually efficacy. They are unable and unwilling to accept such realities because they are caught up in so much worldliness, so that fall into a deep denial of all their wrongs and weaknesses. This is clearly a tragic existential sour-grapes situation.⁵⁸

On the other hand, we cannot say, for example, that the terrible wrong I have done or am going to do, is “between me and my karma”! God may forgive, but not karma. (There is also the problem of who can say that God has forgiven someone, and so on.) So, as far as ideas go, which works more justly without bias or whim? We create imaginary visions of supreme power, and let it run out of control resulting in widespread and protracted harm. Why not keep to a natural moral system, so that we are each accountable for our own actions? Even if karma is hard to be proven right or true, it works better than any God-idea.

3.1.3.4 All religions, in some way, declare that all humans are imperfect and in need of salvation. A key difference that divides religions is how each says this is so. The most basic early Buddhist teaching is that we are not perfect as worldly or unawakened beings. This is, in fact, the first noble truth.⁵⁹ The Buddha then states that we need to understand the conditions that bring about this imperfect state. This is our inability to see true reality which makes us seek succour and salvation *outside* of ourselves. Since our sufferings are essentially self-caused (they arise from our own minds), we have to start by understanding our own minds.

Such an approach also empowers us to have self-accountability and feel the efficacy of self-effort—not hopelessness and the need of salvation through beliefs or from an imaginary external agency. To have this self-liberating wisdom, we need to keep our body (that is, our actions) wholesome or morally virtuous, so that they help to calm and clear our mind. In due course, we will, by our own effort—how else can this be? (Dh 160, 380)—be liberated from suffering by overcoming ignorance and its effects. In this sense, the Buddha declares that *he teaches only one thing*, that is, “suffering and its ending,” such as recorded in **the Anurādha Sutta** (S 22.86).⁶⁰

3.1.4 The Buddha then explains that the systems of the outside wanderers, even if they agree that the spiritual goal (*niṭṭhā*) is “one” (*eka*), not “many” (*puṭhu*), **differ from the Buddhist goal in 8 ways**. The Buddha explains that their goal (or respective goals) does *not* free them from lust, nor from hate, nor from delusion, nor from craving, nor from clinging; their goal lacks vision; it does not remove “favouring or opposing”; and, above all, it does not remove mental proliferation [§5]. We shall examine each of these factors below here.

3.1.5 On the positive side, the Buddha’s teaching, **as distinguished from outside religions**, has these 8 wholesome qualities and a 9th factor explaining the “one” goal. It is for one without lust [3.2], for one without hate [3.3], for one without delusion [3.4], for one without craving [3.5], for one without clinging [3.6], for one with vision [3.7], for one who neither favours nor opposes [3.8], for one who neither delights in nor enjoys mental proliferation [3.9]. This is the “one way” [3.10] of early Buddhism.

3.2 THE BUDDHIST GOAL IS FOR “ONE WITHOUT LUST” (*vīta, rāga*) [§5.2]

3.2.1 Lust (*rāga*, literally “dyed, coloured”) has two negative connotations: it makes us look outside of ourselves and *measure* things; and in measuring, we reify them into things to be *appropriated*. In seeking and reifying these external realities, we are effectively *died or coloured* by them: *we become* them; in other words, our lives and views are simply overwhelmed by them.

A religious group, as a rule, tends to see itself as an exclusive tribe, and those outside the tribe, since they are “outsiders,” are either to be subjugated (serve and obey the tribe) or converted (made to join the tribe). Otherwise, especially in power-centre religion, they may even be righteously destroyed.

Only with the rise of more open religions and **secularism**—especially with the separation of state and church—and the rise of the new learning, science, and psychology, and the accessibility of education for all, that religion has been tamed and made less destructive. Indeed, it becomes more humanized and civilized, that is, it puts man first, and allows a wholesome free society to exist.

⁵⁸ See SD 64.17 (9.2.1).

⁵⁹ See esp **Dhamma, cakka Pavattana S** (S 56.11), SD 1.1.

⁶⁰ **Anurādha S** (S 22.86), SD 21.13; also SD 40a.1 (11.1.1).

3.2.2 Religion today. Religion may today be a caged beast behind the bars of common sense and secularism, but many of us are still fascinated with the tales of beast's beauty, ferocity and talents, oblivious of the countless lives that it has devoured, destroyed and diseased through the ages down to our own days. Even today, the most significant root of widespread violence, mass destruction and internecine massacres is found in religion, especially when it preaches God, tribe, or race.⁶¹

In 1843, philosopher and revolutionary socialist, Karl Marx (1818-1883), wrote these famous lines:

“Religion is the sigh of the oppressed creature, the heart of a heartless world, and the soul of soulless conditions. It is the opium of the people.”⁶²

It means, in an important way, that religion, especially organized religion, in particular Christianity, tends to distract its believers and delude others from the real issues, even deludedly and callously exploiting the tragedies of society to further themselves,⁶³ or by promising succour in faith and security in the hereafter.

Four years later, Charles Kingsley, university professor, historian, writer, and Canon of the Church of England, wrote this honest and insightful observation:

“We have used the Bible as if it were a mere special constable's hand book, an opium dose for keeping beasts of burden patient while they were being overloaded, a mere book to keep the poor in order.” (Quoted in Selsam & Martel (eds), *Reader in Marxist Philosophy*, 1987:224)

If we care to look around and carefully scrutinize organized Buddhism today, especially those run by society's elite and the wealthy, we would see disturbing signs in our own midst, of what were observed some two centuries ago by Marx and by Kingsley in western society and Christianity. Even Buddhism, especially its ethnic forms, have been used as if it were a mere law-enforcer's handbook, an opium dose for keeping beasts of burden patient while they were being overloaded, a mere book to keep the rich in place and the poor in order.

Before we can solve the real problems that hinder and harm Buddhism today, we need to courageously know what these problems really are. Having identified them (or any of them), we then need to ask if we are in any way contributing to it (such as not doing anything about it), and how we can (even in a small way) help solve that problem, or at least, prevent it from affecting us negatively. At least, we should not be silent, when just a word would suffice to muster the wise into wholesome action.

3.2.3 Renunciation and wealth

3.2.3.1 Early Buddhism sees **renunciation** as beginning with “going forth” (*pabbajjā*) and, more importantly, as “moving on” with “letting go” of all worldliness (*nekkhamma*), and heading for “escape” (*nissaraṇa*) from ignorance and craving. This is another way of looking at **the 3 trainings** in moral virtue (renunciation, socially and externally), in mental concentration (letting go of worldliness and avoiding distractions), and in insight wisdom (understanding the nature of spiritual freedom, or escape from the prison of worldliness).

⁶¹ Religious wars, destruction, violence and discrimination are not merely in the histories of western religions and of Islam, but also of Buddhist countries, esp of Sri Lanka and Myanmar, where monks openly support, even initiate, violence against other communities or races. Race-based Buddhism (such as “Chinese Mahayana” and their anti-early Buddhism teachings are growing in modern places like Singapore and Malaysia).

⁶² The quotation comes from the introduction of Marx's proposed work, *A Contribution to the Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Right*, which was never written. The introduction (1843), however, was published in 1844 in Marx's own journal *Deutsch-Französische Jahrbücher*, a collaboration with Arnold Ruge. See A M McKinnon, “Reading ‘Opium of the People’: Expression, Protest and the Dialectics of Religion,” *Critical Sociology* 31,1-2, 2005:15-38.

⁶³ For example, when the 26 Dec 2004 tsunami devastated the Andaman Islands, Phuket (Thailand), and the littoral (shore) regions of the Indian Ocean, killing 186,019 people in 14 countries (UN, *Tsunami Recovery: Taking stock after 12 months*, NY, 2009), the Christians claimed that God punished unbelievers, and Muslims claimed it was Allah's will in showing Islam's greatness, and so on. See Paul & Nadiruzzaman, “Religious interpretations for the causes of the 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami,” *Asian Profile* 41,1 Feb 2013:67-77. For other bizarre claims by various religious followers, see <http://www.religioustolerance.org/tsunami04c.htm>.

3.2.3.2 For this reason, the Buddha unequivocally exhorts monastics to have nothing to do with money and economic activity of any kind.⁶⁴ In **the (Abbha) Upakkilesa Sutta** (A 4.50), the Buddha declares that monastics who consent to accepting gold and silver, or using money, are overwhelmed by an impurity that prevents them from shining spiritually: their lives are darkened like a clouded sky, a fog, a haze, or an eclipse.⁶⁵

The meaning of the “cloud” metaphor is explained in **the Maṇi,cūḷaka Sutta** (S 42.10), thus:

For whomever gold and silver [money] are allowable, for him the 5 cords of sense-pleasure are allowable, too.

For whomever the 5 cords of sense-pleasure are allowable, we can for sure consider him as one who neither has the quality of a recluse nor is he a son of the Sakya.

... there is no way whatever, I say, by which one might consent to or by which one might seek gold and silver!
(S 42.10,8+9/4:326), SD 4.21 (abr), SD 100.10

3.2.4 Buddhism and wealth. Buddhism, as a rule, is not against **wealth**, but it is against the wrong attitude towards wealth and its misuse. Monastics, as already stated, should have nothing to do with wealth [3.2.2]. If they cannot keep to the life of renunciation to which they have pledged themselves, then they should revert to the lay life, and live as good lay followers, who enjoy wealth and worldliness in the spirit of the 5 precepts.⁶⁶

The Buddha has given us teachings on the management of wealth, and its benefits and usages in such texts as the following:⁶⁷

Sigāl’ovāda Sutta	D 31/3:180-193 @ SD 4.1	The layman’s code of discipline
Aputtaka Sutta 1	S 3.19/1:89-91 @ SD 22.4	Wealth is to be enjoyed
Aputtaka Sutta 2	S 3.20/1:91-93 @ SD 22.5	Wealth is to be enjoyed
(Bhoga) Kula Sutta	A 4.255/2:249	A successful family life
Anna,nātha Sutta	A 4.62/2:68	Worldly happiness free from debt
Ādiya Sutta	A 5.41/3:45 f @ SD 2.1	How to enjoy one’s wealth
Dīgha,jānu Sutta	A 8.54/4:281-285 @ SD 5.10	Worldly and spiritual welfare

3.2.5 Ignorance

3.2.5.1 Early Buddhism sees **lust** as the activity of ignorance. Ignorance here is a lack of understanding of the true nature of our self and the world. We are taught by the Buddha that all that exists, all that is, is impermanent. Existence *is* impermanence [1.3.1-1.3.3]. Since everything is impermanent, we cannot really measure it, much less appropriate it. Such an understanding is the beginning of removing the root of lust in the Buddhist training.

3.2.5.2 Lust, as the handmaid of ignorance, makes us see others (even ourself) as “things,” with which to identify, to measure, and to appropriate. We regard even Buddhism as something to identify with, or to measure others with, or to appropriate, or as a means of appropriating people and things. We identify Buddhism with race and gurus. We measure the worldliness of looks, voice, learning, power, and charisma, We work to own the wise or resourceful, or those we deem wise or worthy of adoration, so that others might adore or serve us, too.

3.2.5.3 These are the dangers of the “I” that we must recognize and expose in all their shameless nakedness. We have to constantly reflect that even Buddhist teachings are but our passing views, steps of a training ladder, a Dharma raft we must use to cross the waters of ignorance and craving.⁶⁸ We must see the Dharma as the immeasurable wisdom that liberates us, and with immeasurable compassion, we break

⁶⁴ See **Money and monastics**, SD 4.19.

⁶⁵ A 4.50/2:53 f @ SD 4.20 (abr), SD 100.10.

⁶⁶ On the 5 precepts (which are against killing, stealing, sexual misconduct, lying, and taking intoxicants), see **Veḷu,dvāreyya S** (S 55.7), SD 1.5 (2); **Sīlānussati**, SD 15.11 (2.2); SD 21.6 (1.2); SD 37.8 (2.2).

⁶⁷ For a longer list, see SD 5.10 (1.1).

⁶⁸ See **Notion of diṭṭhi**, SD 40a.1.

this news to others. Above all, we must live as if we own nothing, not even our breaths—as we breathe in, so we must breathe out. The reality is that we can have nothing of this world. By understanding impermanence with clarity and joy, we flow with the stream to awakening, enjoying the truth and beauty that we truly are. This is true renunciation.

3.3 THE BUDDHIST GOAL IS FOR “ONE WITHOUT HATE” (*vīta,dosa*) [§5.3]

3.3.1 Where there is lust (the negative habits of measuring and collecting), there must also be **hate** (*dosa*) (the habit of disliking or harming what does not please us)—just as where there is fire there must be heat. Lust makes us look outside of ourself, behind us, ahead of us, left and right of us, below and above us—but never *within* us. On account of lust, we look back with guilt or remiss, ahead with faith and hope; we measure actions to be wrong or right, evil or good, and imagine hells and heavens.

We see ourselves and our tribesmen with faith and hope, as being right and good, and reward ourselves with heaven and with our God. We imagine destroying those with guilt and remiss, wrong and evil, and cast them, and others who threaten us in any way, into hells, if not we purge them with present evils and sins, or at least ostracize them. Such religions stand with one foot in the mire of lust, the other in the fire of hate.

Only centuries of social evolution and political maturity have removed the fangs and talons of these religious evils, or at least chained them behind the walls of temples or churches, and religious spaces. Only then can humans begin to truly evolve spiritually, and look within themselves for the true light.

3.3.2 The Buddhist path begins to be seen in suffering, that something is not right with the world. As prince Siddhattha sees decay, disease and death in the aged, the ill and the dead, we, too, should see that these signs are reminding us not to tarry in the world or tally its contents. We must move on to seek truth and beauty in renouncing the world, in some way, reflected in prince Siddhattha’s fourth sight, that of the faith-inspiring renunciant. This is the profound joy of renunciation, a spiritual bliss of the free heart.

3.4 THE BUDDHIST GOAL IS FOR “ONE WITHOUT DELUSION” (*vīta,moha*) [§5.4]

3.4.1 **Delusion** (*moha*) feeds lust and hate: lust feeds us with what is conjured up as pleasant and therefore desirable, to be tasted and collected; lust prods us with a fear of seeing the unpleasant, something to be vomited out and voided. Delusion is a mirage to the lost and thirsty.

A mirage is an optical illusion in which a layer of hot air distorts reflections of distant objects, making them look near and real. If we move towards the mirage, we are only heading deeper into the desert heat and sand, going farther away from safety and life itself. The more faith we have in the mirage, the closer we approach harm and death.

Religion invents and works with some of the most believable and beguiling of mirages conceivable by man’s mind. We create, in our images, those of Gods, Buddhas, deities and demons, so that they appear far bigger and more powerful than we are. Our beliefs feed more reality into these imagined phantoms with structure, stories, rituals, prayers, vows, faith, hope, and above all, with delusion. We have sunk our feet so deep into delusion, so that they are immovable like the clay feet of these idols. We cannot move even when we see the open path before us.

3.4.2 There is no room for delusion in the Dharma. All that we see, hear, smell, taste, touch or think are mind-made, constructed willfully or unconsciously.⁶⁹ We should see them as being *impermanent*, and move on. They are but windows to a virtual world out there. True reality is *not* out there, but it is right here where we are: it is within us. We need to examine how we view our self-constructed mirages of the outside world. We cannot change the world out there, but we can and must learn to tame and free our inner world from the mirages and mirage-making so that we are fully free of delusion.

3.5 THE BUDDHIST GOAL IS FOR “ONE WITHOUT CRAVING” (*nīttaṅhā*) [§5.5]

3.5.1 Lust (*rāga*) [3.2] and **craving** (*taṅhā*, literally “thirst”) are virtually synonyms, but *lust* has a broader and deeper sense as a latent tendency (*anusaya*).⁷⁰ Lust, in other words, encompasses craving,

⁶⁹ See **The unconscious**, SD 17.8b; also **Free will and Buddhism**, SD 7.7.

⁷⁰ As an ancient set, the 3 latent tendencies are lust (*rāga*), revulsion (*paṭigha*) and ignorance (*avijjā*) are unconscious tendencies. They manifest themselves as the 3 unwholesome roots (*mūla*), greed (*lobha*), hate (*dosa*), and delusion (*moha*), on a preconscious level. See **Anusaya**, SD 31.3.

which is its active manifestation, especially as the craving for existence (*bhava,tanḥā*) and the craving for non-existence (*vibhava,tanḥā*), which are rooted respectively in the 2 extremes of existence views (*bhava,-diṭṭhi*) and non-existence view (*vibhava,diṭṭhi*) [§6; 4]. However, the most common manifestation of craving is that of sensual craving (*kāma,tanḥā*), which is effectively a synonym for lust (*rāga*) [3.2] which is the first factor characterizing the non-Buddhist systems [§5.2], and as such is not mentioned here.

All the world religions—like Brahmanism, Jainism and related religions of the Buddha’s time—are rooted in some kind of eternalist view (*sassata,diṭṭhi*), the belief that we, or a vital part of us, especially the soul, survives our death. This soul is eternal or immortal, and, according to various systems, either self-existent or created by some almighty creator-God. As such, the ideas of an eternal soul and an almighty God, as a rule, go together.⁷¹ We shall continue this discussion below [4].

3.5.2 Religions rooted in craving demand that we “believe that we may understand,”⁷² to surrender our will to an external agency, such as a God-idea or a power-figure who is viewed as representing him. This is a power relationship, where we surrender all our power to that agency, and simply obey the religious commandments. We might even feel a sense of false security, as if being sheltered by some parent-like higher power. We are simply drawn to such a promise where we, as it were, do not need to do anything at all.

We cannot but fly into the hot decorative lights and offering lamps, burning with the fire of delusion. We crowd in hordes around the colourful pictured lamp-shades, jostling to get into the consuming fire, whose light blinds and burns us up. We then return incarnate to play the whole burning game over and again. Craving brings us back to where the suffering starts, like a uroboros biting its own tail, like cattle to the slaughter-house.

3.5.3 Early Buddhism rejects both craving and craving-related views, so that we can direct our focus to what is truly real, and see things as they really are.⁷³ We cannot go on thinking in the same way (with craving), and expect a something different (that is craving-free). This vital point is highlighted in **the Nibbedhika (Pariyāya) Sutta** (A 6.63), which gives this instructive teaching on the nature of *kāma* (sensual objects) in its key passage:

Bhikshus, these [the 5 cords of sense-pleasures] are not sensual objects (*kāma*), but in the noble discipline, they are called “cords of sensual desire” (*kāma,guṇa*).⁷⁴

*Saṅkappa,rāgo purisassa kāmo
n’ete kāmā yāni citrāni loke
saṅkappa,rāgo purisassa kāo
tiṭṭhanti citrāni that’eva loke
Ath’ettha dhīrā vinayanti chandan ti*

The thought of passion is a person’s sensuality:
There is no sensuality in what is beautiful in the world.
The thought of passion is a person’s sensuality:
What is beautiful in the world remain just as they are.
So here the wise remove the desire for them.⁷⁵

(A 6.63,3.4/3:411), SD 6.11

⁷¹ See **is there a soul?** SD 2.16: on the brahminical conception of soul, see (1.1.1).

⁷² A God-believer, Anselm of Canterbury (1033/34-1109), wrote: “Nor do I seek to understand that I may believe, but I believe that I may understand. For this too I believe, that unless I first believe, I shall not understand.” See **Kesa,puttiya S** (A 3.65), SD 35.4a comy on §3.1 (6) pt 4: Faith in Buddhism.

⁷³ **Truth** means “conformity with facts, agreement with reality” (Shorter Oxford Dict): this is the correspondence theory of truth. Another def is that only absolute truth is the whole, anything less is only a partial truth: this is the coherence theory of truth. A truth, then, is a belief that yields an expected result (or results) when we act on it. **Reality** means the actual condition of things, having an objective independent existence, which we can directly experience, not something artificial, false, or illusory. “Truly real” is the experience of true reality, not a “virtual” reality (something artificial, false, or illusory). “Really are” means what is objectively, independently and universally true (as against a subjective, private and limited truth).

⁷⁴ *Api ca kho bhikkhave n’ete kāmā, kāma,guṇā nam’ete ariyassa vinaye vuccanti*. This is an enigmatic statement whose meaning is clarified in the verse that follows. See foll n.

⁷⁵ This verse, which explains the previous prose sentence, “plays upon the double meaning of *kāma*, emphasizes that purification is to be achieved by mastering the defilement of sensuality, not by fleeing [from] sensually enticing objects.” (A:ÑB 1999:302 n34)

Our body, that is, our 5 physical senses, are not the real problem: they simply function as sensors (imperfect as they may be) by which we experience the world around us. The world around us is “neutral,” in the sense that *it all depends on how we perceive it*. If we perceive them in terms of *more than* merely being pleasant or unpleasant, that is, as something desirable or undesirable (a love-hate reactivity), then what we view as being desirable become “cords of sensual desire” (*kāma,guṇa*).⁷⁶ They only serve to multiply and perpetuate themselves.

3.5.4 On other hand, if we recognize that what we are *really* experiencing of these external sense-objects is simply their impermanence, that they change and become other. It is this impermanence that we experience as **beauty**: we contrast aspects, even moments, of such insights with other similar or related aspects and moments. Beauty is that familiarity and reality, something we have *felt* before that is truly *real* to us. In other words, this kind of beauty is an experience of what is real and true—the **truth**. This truth is expressed and framed on the canvas of beauty.

We feel that *we know this*, that *this is real*: what we see is what we get, what is “out there” *is* what is in here, in our heart and mind. We feel connected with this reality, which now has neither outside nor inside: it just *is*. In this sense, we can say “beauty is truth, and truth beauty.”⁷⁷ This happy experience is one of the greatest benefits of meditation, and one of the most spiritual fruits of Buddhist training. It is evoked in this famous stock phrase on the Buddha’s teaching:

He teaches the Dharma, good in the beginning, good in the middle, good in the end, both in the spirit and in the letter. He proclaims the holy life that is entirely complete and pure. (D 10,1.7)⁷⁸

The word “**good**” (*kalyāṇa*) here has both the senses of “true” and “beautiful.” Truth and beauty are the essence of the 3 trainings, which is **good in the beginning** (the training in moral virtue), **in the middle** (the training in mental stillness), and **in the end** (the wisdom training). Its **spirit** is living truth, its **letter** is beauty incarnate. The holy life of Dharmafaring is the **complete** truth and **pure** beauty. These are the hallmarks of awakening as taught by the Buddha.

3.6 THE BUDDHIST GOAL IS FOR “ONE WITHOUT CLINGING” (*anupādāna*) [§5.6]

3.6.1 The more we cling to an idea, a view or a belief—whether it is about a person, or a ghost, or a demon, or a god, or God, or even an eternal Buddha—the more we will be convinced that what we believe is true. We crave for something we feel (consciously or unconsciously) that is missing in us—usually this is a lack of security. So we seek security in something outside of ourselves, some kind of power-figure, usually a person (a guru or teacher) or a holy being, or some kind of power-source, such as a religious article or ritual.

When such a power-figure or power-source draws our attention away from our feeling of insecurity, we react with the notion, “It works” or “I’ve found it.” Then, we cling to that person, being, article or ritual. From insecurity arises craving; because of craving there is clinging. When we think we lack something, we look for it outside; when we think we have “found it,” we cling to it.

Most religions—especially the God-religions—condition us with the belief that we are “sinners” (we have sinned or fallen short of God’s glory), that we cannot help ourselves to rise from such a state. This is like someone scaring a child with a ghost story, and then promises that he would protect the child (for some benefit). Instead, the child should be told and assured that there is *no* ghost, and to stay away from the ghost tale-spinner. Such stories are unwholesome and are likely to condition us with fear and dependence on an external power-figure or power-source.

3.6.2 The Buddha declares that we are our own master:

The self is the master of the self; | for, who else could the master be?
With a self well tamed; | indeed, one gains a master that is hard to find. (Dh 160, 380)⁷⁹

⁷⁶ On these “5 cords of sense-pleasures” (*pañca kāma,guṇa*), see SD 32.2 (2.3).

⁷⁷ This is from the English Romantic poet John Keats’s “Ode to a Grecian Urn” (1819): see SD 40a.1 (8.1.2).

⁷⁸ This para is part of the renunciation pericope: for refs, see (**Ānanda**) **Subha S** (D 10,1.7) n, SD 40a.13. For an explanation of this Dharma pericope, see SD 40a.1 (8.1.2).

This means that our problems or sense of lack arises from within our own mind. As such, we should understand how we think and feel. As we think, so we are. If we think bad, we become bad. If we think good, that we are likely to act on it, and be good (Dh 1+2).

When we understand our mind, then we see that it creates all kinds of views about ourself and about things. If we think we are bad, then we are likely to act so. If we think we are failures, then we have failed even before we stop doing something bad or try to do something good. These are simply views: how we look at ourself. Just as we view different sides of a mountain, so, too, we can choose to view different aspects of ourself.

Why not look at our good and happy side, and start from there? Notice how we have different views about ourself in the past, and we change these views over time. Even if we think we are bad, we can learn from *why* we think we are bad, and to avoid those negative conditions, and work towards what would better us and make us happier. In short, all our views—especially those about ourself—are provisional. They are like snapshots of moments of our life, but, like it or not, our life keeps changing. If we do not cling to our self-view, then, we will truly grow up, not just grow old. [5]

Early Buddhism teaches that even the best Dharma teachings are but views—even if they are right views—that, *for the moment*, guide us up the rungs of the ladder of spiritual evolution. Each rung of right view is a stable step for us to take another ever upwards. Just as we breathe in and then must breathe out, so too, having stepped steadily on an upper rung, we lift the lower foot up and away from its rung to climb higher. In this way, too, even the Dharma is but a raft we must fashion with our own efforts, and swim with both arms and legs, or paddle, quickly across the waters of ignorance and craving to the far shore of security. Then, having landed, we leave that raft behind and move safely on to awakening.⁸⁰

3.7 THE BUDDHIST GOAL IS FOR “ONE WITH VISION” (*viddasuna*) [§5.7]

3.7.1 Other religions of the Buddha’s time, and even the world religions of today, try to promote themselves by fervently looking at what is beyond them (like some kind of external agency or higher power) for answers and directions. In short, they lack any vision of what really would benefit them. Sadly this is understandable because they have put all their faith and hope outside of themselves, instead of working with what is really troubling them: they are looking in wrong directions.

Many, if not all the world religions today, envision some external agency, such some God, as the embodiment of the greatest good, and so they direct all their efforts in worshipping, adoring and submitting to this idea. If we look carefully into any of these world religions, or any local manifestation of them (some local temple, church or religious group), we will see that many of them, followers and preachers alike, still need to rely on gurus, saints, spirits—and money. In other words, although they speak of religious visions, their actual sights are still those of worldly happiness and power.

3.7.2 In Buddhism, we ask ourselves what is “vision” here? We are reminded to have a “vision of the noble truth” (*ariya,saccāna dassanaṃ*),⁸¹ famously stated in **the Maṅgala Sutta** (Khp 5.3 = Sn 2.4), as follows:

<i>Tapo ca brahma,cariyañ ca</i>	Austerity and the holy life,
<i>ariya,saccāna dassanaṃ</i>	a vision of the noble truths,
<i>nibbāna,sacchikiriyā ca</i>	and attaining nirvana—
<i>etaṃ maṅgalam uttamam</i>	this is supreme blessing. (Khp 5,10 = Sn 267)

Here *tapa* means “religious austerity” in a general Buddhist sense (although in a non-Buddhist sense, it means “asceticism, self-mortification”). It comes from the verb *tapati*, “to give off heat, shine, brighten,” used especially of the sun.⁸² The Sutta Nipāta Commentary explains it metaphorically: “One burns

⁷⁹ See Self-mastery: SD 27.3 (3.1), & Self as refuge: SD 34.1(5.2).

⁸⁰ For the parable of the raft, see **Alaggadūpama S** (M 22,14), SD 3.13.

⁸¹ The term *sacca,dassana* (“vision of the truth(s)”) is helpful although it is a comy term (DhsA 241; PmA 3:562; NmA 2:341), but it reflects sutta teachings, as mentioned here.

⁸² Eg M 1:317,12; Dh 387; Miln 273,16. The verb *tapati*, however, is also often used in a negative sense, meaning “makes hot, burns, harms, trouble,” eg “Why trouble the renunciant?” (*kasmā pabbajitaṃ tapati*, S 1:198,12*); “a bad deed troubles one later [hereafter]” (*pacchā tapati dukkataṃ*, Dh 314b).

away bad unwholesome states” (*pāpake akusale dhamme tapati*, SnA 47). The Khuddaka, pāṭha Commentary, elaborates this as “overcoming covetousness and sorrow, and so on” (*abhijjhā, domanass’ādānam tapanato*) by practising sense-restraint (*indriya, -saṃvara*), making effort and attaining dhyana (KhpA 151).

Tapa, as “austerity,” then evokes self-effort, which seems troublesome at first, as we have to do it ourself (it is so much easier to simply surrender oneself to some succour in an external agency, like a God-figure), and it also seems tedious, as we have to put in some effort (it seems much easier, even enjoyable, to do some routine ritual like praying or receiving blessings from some power-figure).

The **holy life** (*brahma, cariya*) is about personal development by way of self-understanding through self-effort. The “self” is put to the task, as it were, to wear itself down so that we are in time rid of all self-doctrines or self-views. This is where austerity has an inner sense of “self-denial,” that is, rejecting selfishness and self-doctrine.

Such a self-liberating effort is driven by a **vision of the noble truths** (*ariya, saccāna*), that is, seeing and accepting our own failures and seeing that we are not really bad or “sinful,” just as they are, learning how we have failed, so we can remove or correct those conditions, and then enjoy the results of our efforts. Ultimately, this is meant by “**attaining nirvana**” (*nibbāna, sacchikiriyā*), the letting go of all bad states, cultivating good, and, going beyond good and bad (never even thinking of bad), enjoying the bliss of mental freedom. This is the supreme blessing.

3.8 THE BUDDHIST GOAL IS FOR “ONE WHO NEITHER FAVOURS NOR OPPOSES” (*anānuruddha appaṭiviruddha*) [§5.8]

3.8.1 Word analyses

3.8.1.1 The phrase *anānuruddha appaṭiviruddha* has been translated as “one who neither favours nor opposes.” The phrase comprises two opposing words: *anānuruddha* means “not not opposing” (a double negative) or better “not favouring,” and *appaṭiviruddha* means “not obstructing” or “not opposing.” Following English idiom, then, we can translate the phrase as “neither opposing nor favouring,” or, more fully, as “one who neither opposes nor favours.”

Let us examine their respective simpler negative components first [3.8.1.2].

3.8.1.2 We will first examine three simpler negative forms of the two words. For all these words with the double negative as well as the negative forms are formed from the stem *ruddha*, the past participle of *rundhati*, “to obstruct, oppose,” and whose root is √RUNDH or √RUDH, to obstruct.

anuruddha (*a = na*, “not” + *ruddha*, “opposing”), meaning “not opposing,” that is, “compliant, devoted or favourable to”;

aviruddha (*a = na*, “not” + *vi-* means “two, asunder, reverse” + *ruddha* (past participle of *rundhati*, “to obstruct, oppose”), “obstructed, opposed, disturbed,” thus *viruddha* means “hindered, obstructed, disturbed.” And so *aviruddha* means “unhindered, unobstructed, undisturbed.”

paṭiviruddha (*paṭi-*, a prefix here meaning “against, counter,” + *viruddha*, “hindered, obstructed”): *paṭiviruddha* then means “obstructed, or obstructing, opposing, an adversary.”

3.8.1.3 Now, with this understanding, let us examine the two difficult long words.

Anānuruddha (also spelled *ananuruddha*) is broken into prefix *a* (or *na*, “not”) + *anuruddha* (“not opposing”) [3.8.1.2]: “not not opposing.” So, in idiomatic English, *anānuruddha* translates as “not taking any side” or “not favouring.”

Appaṭiviruddha is resolved as *a-p* (*na*, “not” + sandhi⁸³ infix *-p-* to flow with the initial *p-* of *paṭi*) + *paṭiviruddha*, “obstructed, or obstructing, opposing, an adversary” [3.8.1.2]. So *appaṭiviruddha* means “not obstructing” or “without adversarial disposition.”

3.8.1.4 Two of the words discussed here—*anānuruddha* [4.8.1.3] and *aviruddha* [4.8.1.2]—appear in a verse in the **Cha Phass’āyatana Sutta** (S 35.94): “Neither attracted to anything nor repelled by anything” (*anānuruddho aviruddho kenaci*).⁸⁴ Its Commentary explains this sentence as: “One should neither

⁸³ *Sandhi* (P), a grammatical term for “junction,” or joining of words or parts of words to form compounds.

⁸⁴ S 3.94/4:71,16* (SD 94.7).

be attracted to nor be disturbed by anything” (*anānuruddho aviruddho kenacīti kenaci saddhīm n’eva anuruddho na viruddho bhavēyya*, SA 2:381).⁸⁵

3.8.2 Emotional reactivity. The two pairs of words mentioned above—*anānuruddha appaṭiviruddha* and *anānuruddha aviruddha*—reflect **emotional reactivity**. That is, reacting to what is perceived as attractive with lust, and to what is unattractive with disgust or anger. We “favour” people or things on account of lust (*rāga*), and “oppose” them on account of anger (*kodha*) (MA 2:10,23).

Being emotionally reactive, we tend to favour the attractive or pleasant, and reject the unattractive or unpleasant. We simply *react* to the sense-stimuli before us, or more exactly, we tend to measure what we experience now with how pleasant or unpleasant “that” stimulus or object *was* in the past. We are not really living in the present, but in the past, and reliving it again and again. This is the loop of emotional reactivity that feeds our latent tendencies (*anusaya*) of lust, repulsion and ignorance.⁸⁶

3.9 THE BUDDHIST GOAL IS FOR “ONE WHO NEITHER DELIGHTS IN NOR ENJOYS MENTAL PROLIFERATION” (*nippapañc’ārāma nippapañca, ratī*) [§5.9]

3.9.1 Mental proliferation

3.9.1.1 In simple terms, “**mental proliferation**” (*papañca*) refers to the mind’s habit and power of attracting thoughts and multiplying them, so that we construct and reinforce a very private reality for ourselves.⁸⁷ **The Madhu, piṇḍika Sutta** (M 18) describes how mental proliferation (thought explosion) arises unconsciously, through the activity of any of the senses, when experienced through a conjunction of sense-faculty, sense-object and sense-consciousness (say, the eye, a vision, and eye-consciousness), there is contact, which leads to feeling, then to perceiving, and on to thinking about it, and “what one thinks about, one mentally proliferates.”

From that as source, proliferation of conception and perception

assails a person regarding past, future and present (the sense-objects)

cognizable through (the respective sense-faculty).

(M 18,16), SD 6.14

3.9.1.2 If we are caught up with this mental multiplying and magnifying of our thoughts, these inner, virtual realities become so real that they take over our lives, so that we are altogether cut off from the true reality within. On the deepest level, when the realities become so private and limited, it is called madness.

These are thoughts at their worst, colonizing our whole mind so that we must slave ourselves to their every whim and fancy. This jungle of thoughts saps us of all our energies for creative thought and for attentive communication. Our mind is so flooded up with thoughts that we are simply unable to focus in any useful way, much less to meditate.

3.9.2 Latent tendencies

3.9.2.1 **The Madhu, piṇḍika Sutta** (M 18) describes how on account of any of the 7 latent tendencies—lust, aversion, views, doubt, conceit, desire for existence and ignorance, there is mental proliferation (*papañca*) [3.9.1]. They infect the mind so that it proliferates with all kinds of thoughts. This mental proliferation first occurs unconsciously [3.9.1], and then, on account of familiarity, it can rise to the conscious level.⁸⁸ In other words, when we notice this happening, we either have no control over it or we allow it to happen, and then we may even desire that this happens. We need diligent and proper mental training to prevent or even just weaken the occurrence or effects of mental proliferation.

For easier reference, we can distill these 7 latent tendencies into a set of 3 latent tendencies, that is, those of craving, views and conceit (*taṇhā, diṭṭhi, māna*)⁸⁹ (MA 2:10,16). Our mind bursts into thoughts on

⁸⁵ Cf **Cha Phass’āyatana S** (S 35.94): “Neither attracted to anything nor repelled by anything” (S 35.94/4:71, -16*), SD 94.7, where Comy glosses “One should be neither attracted to nor disturbed by anything” (*anānuruddho aviruddho kenacīti kenaci saddhīm n’eva anuruddho na viruddho bhavēyya*, SA 2:381).

⁸⁶ These are deeper and darker versions of the 3 unwholesome roots, that is, greed (*lobha*), hate (*dosa*) and delusion (*moha*). See SD 17.4 (7.3) & **Anusaya**, SD 31.3.

⁸⁷ On mental proliferation (*papañca*), see **Madhu, piṇḍika S** (M 18), SD 6.14 (2).

⁸⁸ M 18,16+17 (SD 6.14).

⁸⁹ M 18 @ SD 6.14 (2+3).

account of our craving (of wanting more and more), of views (we take pride in having opinions, especially what differs from those of others), and of conceit (we are always measuring ourselves against others just to be on top of things).

3.9.2.2 A simple but vital way of understanding the latent tendencies is that they insidiously and voraciously feed our unconscious with lust (*rāgānusaya*), aversion (*paṭighānusaya*) and ignorance (*avijjā' - nusaya*), which are the deepest roots of the 3 unwholesome roots (greed, hate and delusion) themselves [4.5.1.3]. **The Cha Chakka Sutta** (M 148) instructively explains that when contact (*phassa*) arises on account of the meeting of a sense-faculty, its sense-object and consciousness, there is a hedonic reaction to it, that is, we are drawn to what we perceive as pleasant, repelled by the unpleasant, and ignore what is neither. This is how the latent tendencies arise and are reinforced:

When one is touched by a *pleasant feeling*, one delights in it, welcomes it, remains attached to it.

Thus one's latent tendency of lust (*rāgānusaya*)⁹⁰ lies latent.

When one is touched by a *painful feeling*,

one sorrows, grieves, laments, beats one's breast and falls into confusion.

Thus one's latent tendency of aversion (*paṭighānusaya*) lies latent.

When one is touched by a *feeling that is neither pleasant nor painful*,

one does not understand it as it really is,

the arising, the passing away, the gratification, the danger, and the escape with regards to that *feeling*.⁹¹

Thus one's latent tendency of ignorance (*avijjā' nusaya*)⁹² lies latent. (M 148,29), SD 26.6

3.9.2.3 The first step towards breaking this cycle is to restrain the senses, which involves stopping at the bare sense-experience without plastering it over with layers of colourful meanings that are purely subjective. A classic example of the instruction in **sense-restraint** (*indriya, samvara*) is the one the Buddha gives to the monk Māluṅkyā,putta as recorded in **the Māluṅkyā,putta Sutta** (S 35.95),⁹³ thus:

“...Māluṅkyāputta, in what is to be seen, heard, sensed and cognized by you,
 in the seen there will be only the seen;
 in the heard there will only be the heard;
 in the sensed there will only be the sensed;

⁹⁰ On these 3 latent tendencies (*anusaya*)—lust, aversion and ignorance—see **Cūḷa Vedalla S** (M 44.25-28/1:303 f), SD 40a.9; also **Anusaya**, SD 31.3.

⁹¹ *Adukkham-asukhāya vedanāya phutṭho samāno tassā vedanāya samudayañ ca atthaṅgamañ ca assādañ ca ādīnavañ ca nissaranañ ca yathā, bhūtaṃ na-p, pajānāti*. On the underscored terms (ie, “the arising, the passing away, the gratification, the danger, and the escape”), see eg **Satta-ṭṭhāna S** (S 22.57/3:62-65), SD 29.2.

⁹² Note “ignorance” is mentioned twice here: this is the first one, which refers only to the lack of understanding of the arising, etc, of neutral feeling (which can be called “cognitive ignorance”). The second mention [§28b] is the ignorance that is at the root of samsara (cyclic existence) (which can be called “existential ignorance”). (MA 5:101)

⁹³ This teaching is also given to the ascetic Bāhiya Dārucīriya (**Bāhiya S**, U 1.10/8), SD 33.7. According to SA, in the form base, i.e. in what is seen by eye-consciousness, “there is only consciousness”, that is, as eye-consciousness is not affected by lust, hatred or delusion in relation to form that has come into range, so the *javana* will be just a mere eye-consciousness by being empty of lust, etc. So, too, for the heard and the sensed. The “cognized” is the object cognized by the mind-door adverting (*mano, dvārāvajjana*). In the cognized, “only the cognized” is the adverting (consciousness) as the limit. As one does not become lustful, etc, by adverting, so I will set my mind with adverting as the limit, not allowing it to arise by way of lust, etc. *You will not be by “that” (na tena)*: you will not be aroused by *that* lust, or irritated by *that* hatred, or deluded by *that* delusion. *Then you will not be “therein” (na tattha)*: the seen.” For eye-consciousness sees only form in form, not some essence that is permanent, etc. So too for the remaining types of consciousness (ie the *javana* series, SĀPT), there will be merely the seen. Or, alternatively, the meaning is “My mind will be mere eye-consciousness, which means the cognizing of form in form. When you are not aroused by that lust, etc, then “you will not be therein”—not bound, not attached, not established in what is seen, heard, sensed and cognized. (See Bodhi S:B 1410 n75)

in the cognized there will only be the cognized.”⁹⁴ (S 35.95,13/4:73), SD 5.9

3.9.2.4 **The Madhu,piṇḍika Sutta** (M 18) after describing how mental proliferation (*papañca*) arises unconsciously [3.9.1], then consciously [3.9.2], closes by telling us how we can end the proliferation. Theoretically, when there is no sense-faculty, no sense-object, and no sense-consciousness, contact would not arise; without contact, there is no feeling; without feeling, there is no perception; when we do not perceive, we do not think; and without thought there is no mental proliferation.⁹⁵

The best way to stop, or at least weaken, mental proliferation is through meditation. In meditation, we first sit in a proper and comfortable position⁹⁶ so that we can stop thinking about the body, and direct our attention wholly to the mind. Then, we use a suitable meditation—usually the breath meditation or the cultivation of lovingkindness—to calm the thoughts down so that the mind is calm, clear and blissful—and thought-free. We go on enjoying and strengthening the bliss, and in due time, direct the clear mind to see the true reality of all mental states—that they are mentally constructed, impermanent, unsatisfactory and non-self.⁹⁷

3.9.3 *Atam,mayatā.*

3.9.3.1 Building on this understanding, objectively restraining our sense-experiences, we go a little deeper, taking them for what they really are (seeing, hearing, smelling, tasting, touching and thinking), without identifying with them in any way. “That I am *not*,” “There is *no* me in that,” “That is *not* mine.” This is called “disowning,” not using “I, me, mine” regarding our sense-experiences, for they are just momentary events. The moment you even say “I,” they are gone. The moment you see something of “me” in it, it is gone. The moment you want to own it as “mine,” it is gone.

This practice also entails turning away from seeking solutions and solace from *outside* of oneself, that is, ritually or depending on some kind of external agency, when the real issues have arisen from our own way of thinking, arising in our own mind. To “identify” with any of the senses (our only *means* of knowledge) or their sense-objects (the only *kinds* of knowledge we can have), is to see them as being fixed and unchanging, which is basically false and unhelpful to spiritual development.

3.9.3.2 A special Pali word for this from the early texts is *atam,mayatā*, “not-that-ness” or “non-identification.” It is the opposite of *tam,mayatā*, “made-of-thatness” or emotional “identification.” Under “normal” circumstances, we (as worldlings) are caught up with identifying with [3.9.3.1] what we *think, do, or say*. We put “ourselves” into “it.” When others like *it* or agree with *it*, we are fed with craving for more positive strokes, for more grand views of ourselves, and are fed with more conceit, measuring ourselves against others, making sure that we are in charge, and that “they” are useful and amenable to us, that we are in control. This is like collecting “yes” and “love” in Facebook, and rejecting any disagreement, so

⁹⁴ This verse is the crux of the **Maluṅkyā,putta S** and *satipaṭṭhāna*. In sutta terms, such experiences are not to be seen as “This is mine” (*etam mama*) (which arises through craving, *taṇhā*), or as “This I am” (*eso ’ham asmi*) (due to conceit, *māna*), or as “This is my self” (*eso me attā*) (due to wrong view, *diṭṭhi*) (**Anatta Lakkhaṇa S**, S 3:68). In short, such experiences are not “beliefs” but direct experiences of reality. See P Harvey, *The Selfless Mind*, 1995:32 f. In simple Abhidhamma terms, such process should be left at the sense-doors, and not allowed to reach the mind-door. As long as the experience of sensing is mindfully left at its sense-door and taken for what it really is, that is an experience of reality (*param ’attha*); after it has reached the mind-door and evaluated it becomes conventional (*paññatti*) reality, that brings one suffering due to greed, hate or delusion. When such sense-experiences are mindfully left on the reality level, one would, in due course, see the 3 characteristics of impermanence, unsatisfactoriness and non-self. See Mahasi Sayadaw, *A Discourse on Malukyaputta Sutta*, tr U Htin Fatt, Rangoon, 1981.

⁹⁵ M 18,18 @ SD 6.14.

⁹⁶ On how to sit for meditation, see **Satipaṭṭhāna S** (M 10,3.2), SD 13.3 & nn. On general principles of meditation, see **Bhāvanā**, SD 15.1.

⁹⁷ If we are new to the practice, or the whole process seems difficult, we only need to reflect on impermanence, and make a habit of it: see (**Anicca**) **Cakkhu S** (S 25.1), SD 16.7. On reflecting on the 3 characteristics, see **Atam,mayatā**, SD 19.13 (1).

that *we* are on top of things. We are control freaks, the well sung victims of *thatness*, swept and drowning in our own thoughts, views and self-image.⁹⁸ [3.9.2]

3.9.3.3 *Atammayatā*, “not-that-ness,” is the true spirit of renunciation and liberation. When we renounce the world to become monastics, we no more identify with the world. We let go of our old self and self-centredness, without creating any new one. Otherwise, we are merely joining the monastic community as a “thief,” as the saying goes,⁹⁹ deviously letting go of a small gain for greater selfish gains.

Many of us renounce the world with a noble aspiration, but down the road, we stray from it. We start identifying with the world that we have avowedly renounced, measuring people whom we are supposed to accept unconditionally. We have become a mere shell of a renunciant, hollow person. We try to fill that empty, bottomless abyss with the subtle **cravings** for economic and financial security. We try to impress others with personal **views**, private truths, fabulous visions and imaginative creations in our own image.¹⁰⁰

With **conceit**, we skillfully measure and tamper with people, collecting those we see as beneficial and profitable, and culling the rest. When the moment comes for us to leave this world, we find ourselves right back where we started, but bound for a darker destiny.¹⁰¹ The tragic thing is that we do not even know this: that’s why we speak of the need to “awaken.”

3.9.3.4 If we meditate rightly, we are likely to experience the various levels of *atammayatā* or letting go. We begin, at least temporarily, with socially letting go, leaving our family, profession and friends, to spend time with ourselves in meditation. Then, we sit as comfortably as we can, so that we can gently let go of our body, along with seeing, hearing, smelling, and touching, and lessen our thinking. When any of them do arise, we see it simply as a passing experience, as being impermanent.

Having “renounced” our body, we go on to fully attend to our mind. Whatever feelings or thoughts that arise, we do not identify with them. As **the (Dasaka) Cetanā’karaṇīya Sutta** (A 10.2) reminds us, there’s nothing we need to do for a proper meditation, except lay our foundation of moral virtue. “Letting go” means letting all the true and beautiful meditative states arise by themselves. It is as if they are there like fabulously beautifully gentle beings in the deep space of our heavenly mind, who will appear and frolic with us when we are perfectly still and happy.

Yet, even such experiences are but passing clouds in a vast sky-like mind. We let them pass until the whole sky and heaven are beautifully clear and truly spacious. The heavens do not identify with anything: it is the emptiness that embraces everything. Emerging from such meditations, we ourselves become more spacious and divinely radiant: we are completely at peace, embracing everything. We are a veritable walking heaven, touching and changing lives.¹⁰²

3.10 EARLY BUDDHISM AS THE “ONE AND ONLY WAY” [§5.1]

3.10.1 The “one-going path” and the “one and only way”

3.10.1.1 We have already discussed the main points regarding “the uniqueness of the Buddha Dharma” [3.1-3.9]. Here, we will examine this uniqueness in the light of the famous phrase, **the “one way”** (*ekāyana*), found at the beginning of the Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta (M10) and the Mahā Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta (D 12), that says:

“Bhikkhus, this is the path for one-going,¹⁰³

for the purification of beings, [56] for overcoming sorrow and lamentation, for the disappearance of pain and displeasure,¹⁰⁴ for gaining the right way,¹⁰⁵ for realizing nirvana,

⁹⁸ Those who have lived through guru cults, such as TM and Maharishi Mahesh, know this only too well. See SD 17.8c (8.4.3).

⁹⁹ **Arahatta Susīma S** (S 12.70,58), SD 16.8; SD 45.18 (2.3.3.2) almsfood; SD 49.2 (1.1.3) recluses.

¹⁰⁰ On “private truth (*pacceka,sacca*),” see SD 40a.8 (5.2); SD 48.1 (6.1.2.5-6.1.2.10).

¹⁰¹ For a study of difficulties that such renunciants might face, see **Wanderers of today**, SD 24.6b.

¹⁰² For a special study, see *Atammayatā*, SD 19.13.

¹⁰³ *Ekāyano maggo*, lit “one-going path,” alt “the path where one goes by oneself,” ie “the direct one-way path to samadhi.” See SD 13.1 (3.2).

¹⁰⁴ *Dukkha,domanassa*, sometimes tr as “pain and sadness.” Tr here follows **Mahā Satipaṭṭhāna S** (D 22,18 (4.3+4)), SD 13.2 = **Sacca Vibhaṅga S** (M 141,16+17), SD 11.11. Cf (**Bhaya**) **Vera S** (A 5.17) where we have “mental

that is to say, the 4 focuses of mindfulness.¹⁰⁶ (M 10,2), SD 13.3 = (D 22,1.3), SD 13.2

3.10.1.2 “**The path of one-going**” (*ekāyana magga*) is a pregnant expression, one that is polysemic, playing on the various senses of “one,” in reference to the 4 focuses of mindfulness (*satipaṭṭhāna*).¹⁰⁷ Here, we will apply this term more broadly to early Buddhism as a whole, as reflected in the teachings of the Cūla Sīha,nāda Sutta, where Buddhism is said to be unique, that is, “the one and only way” to awakening. [3.1]

3.10.2 The only way = the eightfold way

3.10.2.1 The “only way” here is neither a meditation method nor a teaching, it is the whole path of practice itself, that is the whole of the Buddha Dharma, that is, the noble eightfold path. Buddhaghosa, in his commentary on the Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta (MA 1:231), quotes these Dhammapada verses to show that the “one-going way” is really the noble eightfold way itself, thus:

<p>The eightfold (path) is the best of paths; the 4 statements¹⁰⁸ are the best of truths; detachment from lust is the best of states— of the two-legged, the one with eyes (is best).</p> <p>There is only this path, no other, for the purification of vision. As such, keep to this path— this is the bewilderment of Māra.</p>	<p><i>maggān'aṭṭhaṅgiko seṭṭho</i> <i>saccānaṃ caturo padā</i> <i>virāgo seṭṭho dhammānaṃ</i> <i>dipadānaṃ ca cakkhumā</i></p> <p><i>eso va maggo natth'añño</i> <i>dassanassa visuddhiyā</i> <i>etaṃ hi tumhe paṭipajjathā</i> <i>mārass'etaṃ pamohanāṃ</i> (Dh 273 f)</p>
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3.10.2.2 We need to practise the Buddha Dharma as a whole, as it is, in order to taste its fruit, that is, liberation and awakening. If we only practise the moral conduct aspect, wholesome as it may be, we will only attain divine birth, or gain earthly births blessed with long life, beauty, happiness, power, wealth, and so on, but *not* awakening itself. In other words, we are still caught in the wheel of life of cosmic “snakes and ladders.”

Even if we both undergo the training in moral virtue and in mental cultivation, and attain a deep level of concentration and bliss, but stop at that, we will at best attain happy rebirths, say, in the form or the formless worlds. We still would *not* attain awakening because we have stopped midway on the path. We are still caught in the wheel of life.

The eightfold path, then, constitutes the 3 trainings of the eightfold path, those in moral virtue (*sīla sikkhā*), in mental concentration (*samādhi, sikkhā*), and in wisdom training (*paññā, sikkhā*). Moral virtue prepares our body and speech so that our life conduces to mental cultivation. With moral virtue and mental cultivation, we will be able to use our meditation and spiritual understanding to gain insight into the true nature of things, so that we are fully awakened to true reality.¹⁰⁹

3.10.3 The path to “oneness”

3.10.3.1 Here, we shall see the word “one” (*eka*) referring to the early Buddhist conception of mental training and meditative attainment. In terms of the mind, “one” refers to it being “unified,” or, technically, attain to “oneness” (*ekatta*), that is, (1) as a noun, from the Sanskrit *eka, tva*, meaning “(mental) oneness,”¹¹⁰ or (2) an adjective, from the Sanskrit *ek'ātman*, “of one nature, uniform, unique.”¹¹¹

pain or displeasure” (*cetasikam pi dukkham domanassam*) (A 5.17,4/3:205, passim), SD 6.4. See Walshe 1996 (D:W 589 n627). For a broader sense of *domanassa*, see §3 n on *abhijjhā, domanassa*.

¹⁰⁵ “For gaining the right way,” *nāyassa adhiḡamāya*. See SD 13.1 (3.3) above.

¹⁰⁶ “Focuses of mindfulness,” *satipaṭṭhāna*: see SD 13.1 (3.1) above.

¹⁰⁷ This is based on a longer study at SD 13.1 (3.2). Here, we will only mention related ideas that throw more light on the fact of the uniqueness of early Buddhism, as highlighted in **Cūla Sīha,nāda S** (M 11).

¹⁰⁸ Also called the “fourfold exposition” (*catu-p, padam veyyakaraṇam*); see **Kiṭagiri S** (M 70.25), SD 12.1 (6a).

¹⁰⁹ See SD 13.1 (3.2.4).

¹¹⁰ *Ekatta* (n) as “oneness, singleness, unity” (esp as a support for mental concentration), eg M 1::3,29-31; S 1:49,9*; Pm 1:17,13-18,27. For other senses, see CPD: ¹ekatta.

3.10.3.2 Of special importance in meditation is the compound *ek’agga*, “(n) peace of mind; (adj) one-pointed, unified,”¹¹² and its noun, *ek’aggatā*, “(mental) one-pointedness, unification (of mind),” especially as one of the fifth or last of the 5 dhyana-factors,¹¹³ especially as *cittassa ekaggatā* or *cittass’ekaggatā*, “one-pointedness of mind.”¹¹⁴

3.10.3.3 The high point in meditation, short of sainthood or liberation itself, is the attaining of dhyana (*jhāna*). **Dhyana** can refer to either the meditation practice or the state that it brings, that is, when the mind completely frees itself from the 5 mental hindrances,¹¹⁵ and from all sense-experiences (including thinking).¹¹⁶ The mind in dhyana is lucidly alert and profoundly ecstatic, but all-knowing and sense-experience as we know them are suspended: there is only “feeling,” that is, a direct but passive experience of profound joy.

Dhyana can occur for a brief moment, or last up to a week at the most.¹¹⁷ They are of two types. The first, the more common, are the form dhyanas (*rūpa,jhāna*), when the mind has fully transcended the physical senses (as described), and second, the formless dhyanas (*arūpa,jhāna*) or attainments (*arūpa samāpatti*), based on the 4th dhyana,¹¹⁸ are phases of purely mental experiences of ever more refined consciousness.¹¹⁹

3.10.3.4 None of these dhyanas, in themselves, can bring about awakening. They are however, necessary for the overcoming of the mental hindrances [3.10.2.3], so that we can be, at least, temporarily free from sensual desire and so on, which hinder the rise of wisdom. While dhyana is not necessary for the attaining of streamwinning and once-return, the first two stages of sainthood that the laity will normally strive for, dhyana is needed for the attaining of non-return and arhathood,¹²⁰ the goals of the true renunciants.

The Aṭṭhaka,nāgara Sutta (M 52) is an important text that describes how arhathood, if not non-return, is attained by way of dhyana meditation cultivated, say, through the breath meditation or the cultivation of lovingkindness. Having attained dhyana, we first enjoy the peace and joy until we are fully familiar with the dhyanas. Then emerging from it, we reflect thus:

“Even this first dhyana is (mentally) constructed [mind-made], intentionally formed. What is constructed and intentionally formed is impermanent, subject to ending.” (M 52,4.3 etc), SD 41.2

If we are steady in doing this, then, we will destroy the defilements and then attain arhathood. If we are unable to do so, “because of that desire in dharmas, that delight in dharmas” (*dhamma,rāga dhamma,-nandī*), that is, we are still caught up with the dhyanic joy, then we will attain non-return. In other words, as long as we persevere in our proper spiritual efforts, awakening will arise in due course.¹²¹

¹¹¹ *Ekatta* (adj) as “unique,” eg M 1:364,26, 3:104,19; S 2:77,13+14; A 3:343,19

¹¹² *Ekagga*: (n) Tha 406; (adj) V 3:4,6; D 2:210,2; M 1:21,33 = 1:47,6 = 2:14,24 = Pm Pm 1:176,16.

¹¹³ The 5 dhyana-factors (*jhān’aṅga*) are initial application (*vitakka*), sustained application (*vicāra*), zest (*pīti*), joy (*sukha*) and one-pointedness of the mind (*cittassa ekaggatā*): see SD 8.4 (5.1.1).

¹¹⁴ *Cittassa ekaggatā*: D 2:217,2 = M 3:71,21 = A 4:402,6 ≈ S 5,21,15; M 1:301,13.

¹¹⁵ The 5 mental hindrances (*pañca nīvaraṇa*) are sensual desire (*kāma-c,chanda*), ill will (*vyāpāda*), sloth and torpor (*thīna,middha*), restless and remorse (*uddhacca,kukkucca*). and doubt (*vicikicchā*): see **Nīvaraṇa**, SD 32.1 (1).

¹¹⁶ On whether thinking occurs in dhyana, see **The Buddha discovered dhyana**, SD 8.4.

¹¹⁷ On the Buddha’s different meditations over 7 weeks, see SD 26.1 (5).

¹¹⁸ On form dhyanas, see **Dhyana**, SD 8.4 (5+7+8).

¹¹⁹ The 4 formless attainments (*samāpatti*) are those of (1) boundless space, (2) boundless consciousness, (4) nothingness, and (4) neither-perception-nor-non-perception. See SD 24.11 (5).

¹²⁰ On these 4 saints—the streamwinning, the once-returner, the non-returner, and the arhat—see **Alagaddūpama S** (M 22,42-47), SD 3.13; **Ānāpāna,sati S** (M 118,9-12), SD 7.13; **Samaṇa-m-acala S 1** (A 4.87), SD 20.13 + **S 2** (A 4.88), SD 20.14.

¹²¹ Further on “oneness,” see SD 13.3 (3.2.3).

3.10.4 The directness of the path

3.10.4.1 Of all the religions and sects, and meditation systems, only the early Buddhist path, in its simplicity—free of self-identity view (including belief in any kind of eternal soul), free of attachment to rituals and vows (including guru worship), and free of doubt (including belief in some kind of external supreme deity)—is efficacious in bringing to us the awakening as taught by the Buddha. There are no “recluses” (*samaṇa*) outside of the early Buddhist system [§2].

3.10.4.2 However, with the growing awareness of Buddhism by the global community, such as through the Internet and the open education and learning—other religions, too, are making significant adjustments to their doctrines and practices. Almost every major religion and religious group today has adopted and adapted some form of Buddhist meditation or “mindfulness” practice into their system.

This vital development gives such faiths a common tool for religious dialogue in due course. Those who are serious in their meditation will somehow taste its peace and joy for themselves. Furthermore, if they somehow apply even a little of what they have learned from Buddhism, especially the idea of impermanence, and if they do not cling on to any self-views, they will be able to enter the stream to Buddhist awakening in this life itself. After all, early Buddhism teaches self-knowing and self-awakening.

3.10.4.3 We are, as a rule, limited by our beliefs. Religions that insist on secret teachings and esoteric rituals are simply using them like barbed wires or electrical fences to keep their flock within their pen. If such teachings and practices are really liberating, then after benefitting from them, we would not need them any more! It is like good medicine and treatment: once we fully recovered, we do not need them anymore, as long as we take good care of ourself.

Similarly, as Buddhism grew beyond India and was assimilated in local cultures, it grew in its mythology, philosophy and rituals. Many such ideas are so imaginative and fabulous that they can only be accepted without questioning or with fear. These are the ideas and rituals that burden us as followers, limit our personal growth, and hinder our individuation process. Religion, like culture, often stops, or at least limits, our individual growth—we must remain forever a statistic in the herd.

Yet, there can be culture that is vibrant and liberating, that brings out the best of us. It is less ethnic or not at all; it is a humanizing and creative process; or it might even divinize and liberate us when we imbibe it right here and now. Meditation culture is one such liberating process for the individual. Buddhist meditation is so versatile that anyone or any group or any religion can take it up and practise it as if it is their own. This spiritual versatility is unique to early Buddhism. [3.1].

4 The 2 extreme views [§§6-8]

4.0 In this section, we will apply our understanding of the Sutta’s key teaching as a commentary on the religious situation of our own times, so that we have a better idea what we are up against, and how we may be able to deal with them, if not to solve them with our personal and collective ability in the spirit of the Buddha Dharma. If you wish to skip the modern commentarial section, read from [4.3.5.5] onwards.

4.1 THE 3 EXTREME VIEWS AND THE 2 EXTREMES

4.1.1 Existence-based views

4.1.1.1 According to the Cūḷa Sīha,nāda Sutta, the outside systems are based one either of 2 extreme views, that is, those of **the existence view** (*bhava, diṭṭhi*) and **the non-existence view** (*vibhava, diṭṭhi*) [§6]. These 2 extreme views are, in turn, closely related to the 2 extremes (*dve antā*) mentioned in **the Dhamma,cakka Pavattana Sutta** (S 56.1), that is, the “devotion of the enjoyment of sensual pleasures” and the “devotion to self-mortification.”¹²²

4.1.1.2 A brief note on the translation of *bhava*. It comes from the abstract noun from √BHŪ, “to be, is,” from which we get *bhavati*, “to be, exist, is.” Its shorter synonym is *hoti*, but this comes from √HŪ, “to be, is.” More specifically, *bhavati* has the sense of “becoming,” while *hoti* usually simply means “is.” However, in usage and translation, they are practically synonyms.¹²³ Then, there is the verb *atthi*, “to exist, to be,” whose root is √AS, “to be,” and its abstract noun is *atthitā*, “existence, being.”

¹²² Respectively, *kāma,sukh’allikānuyoga* and *atta,kilamathānuyoga* (S 56.11,2-3/5:421) + SD 1.1 (3.1).

¹²³ PED, in fact, treats *hoti* under the headword, *bhavati*, as one of its grammatical forms.

Note that both the abstract nouns here—*bhava* and *atthitā* (which is rare)—have the sense of “being, existence.” Some people render *bhava* as “becoming” to emphasize the dynamic nature of existence, but it is simply awkward and inelegant. It is also possible to render it as “being,” although we would reserve this for *satta* (from √SANT, “to be; true; good”).¹²⁴ Most commonly today, we will see *bhava* translated as “existence,” despite its complicated philosophical baggage in English.

The basic rules for translating such Pali forms is first and foremost, to clearly understand the meanings and usages of each form. Then, we need to examine the context of the word. Only then, can we seek a suitable English word (very rarely are there any exact equivalents between the two languages). The English word should at least partly overlap in meaning with the Pali. Above all, we should “think” in Pali when reading the suttas, that is, define or redefine the translation according. The translator has to somehow define the terms he uses.¹²⁵

4.1.2 The existence view. The two views are closely related. The existence view, rooted in **the eternalist view** (*sassata, diṭṭhi*)—the belief that while this body is impermanent, the soul is eternal or immortal. As such, those religionists who hold such views generally see their bodies as a hindrance to salvation (liberation in their terms), so that they practise *the devotion to self-mortification*, torturing their bodies with painful rituals, even ending in death, to liberate their soul to merge with the universal soul (Brahman) or go to heaven.

4.1.3 The non-existence view. The non-existence view, on the other hand, is the belief that the body and the soul are identical, so that when the body dies, so does the soul. This is known as **the annihilationist view** (*uccheda, diṭṭhi*). Since proponents of this view also reject any idea of the hereafter or survival, they believe that everything ends with their death (which means they also reject the teachings of karma and rebirth). With such beliefs, they tend to regard their body as the only source of pleasure (since, in their view, there is no heaven after death), and *devote themselves to sensual pleasures*. The materialists of the past and of today generally hold this belief.

4.2 THE 3 KINDS OF EXISTENTIAL CRAVING

4.2.1 Craving, non-existence and pleasure

4.2.1.1 Now, there is a tendency amongst those who uphold *the non-existence view* to believe that suffering ends with death. This wrong view is known as **craving for non-existence** (*vibhava, taṇhā*). Similarly, in the same category of adherents of the non-existence view, we also have those who abandon themselves to sensual pleasures [3.2]. They are said to have **craving for sensual pleasures** (*kāma, taṇhā*), that is, desire to enjoy the 5 cords of sense-pleasures (those of the 5 physical senses).

Generally, any kind of habitual desire for life in the sense-world that we inhabit can be said to be rooted in a *craving for sensual pleasures*. Since we depend on our senses to know things and make sense of them, we are likely to be inclined to indulge in those experiences we view as pleasureable to us—this is the “pleasure principle.” Conversely, we are disinclined to indulge in those experiences we view as being painful to us—this is the “pain principle.” The problem here is that we lack proper understanding of the real nature of pleasure and pain, and how they are related. [4.5.7.4]

4.2.1.2 These two cravings—commonly found in the views of the materialists and annihilationists [4.1]—are rooted in a “physicalist” view, since these views are centred around the physical body.¹²⁶ Since these cravings have to do with existence, we can call them “existential craving.” In an important way, such cravings are body-based (after all, our body is the 5 senses). Hence, we need to understand the nature of our body [4.3.5.5; 4.5.4.2].

4.2.2 According to the commentary to **the Bhāra Sutta** (S 22.2),¹²⁷ there is a third kind of existential craving, which is related to deep meditation—this is the third kind of existential craving. This is the lust for form-sphere existence or formless-sphere existence, attachment to dhyana, and lust accompanied by *the eternalist view*—this is called “**craving for existence**” (*bhava, taṇhā*) (SA 2:264).

¹²⁴ Often as a prefix, as in *sappurisa* (*sant + purisa*), “good person, true individual.”

¹²⁵ See esp the “Humpty Dumpty rule,” SD 17.4 (2.3).

¹²⁶ See SD 1.1 (3.1).

¹²⁷ S 22.22 (SD 17.14).

4.2.3 It is interesting that here we have the 3 kinds of existential craving—the cravings for sense-pleasures, for existence, and for non-existence [4.1]—which are rooted in the 2 views, that is, the existence view (the basis for craving existence) and the non-existence view (the cravings for sense-pleasure and for non-existence). It should be noted that whether we are conscious of such views or not, these related cravings could arise in any of us if we are unawakened. In other words, they may be unconscious views or tendencies, but despite this fact, or even because of this fact, they have a strong hold on us.¹²⁸

4.2.4 An influence on us would be stronger, and more efficacious, even more destructive, if we are not really aware that there is such an influence. If something is hidden, we cannot see it. Hence, we need to bring it out of hiding, into the open mind, so that we can see it for what it really is. Then, upon deeper examination, we are able to discover the causes and conditions for it. Knowing what it really is, and what brings it about, allows us to know how to end it; and finally, we only need to make the effort to be free from it. This is the 4-truth approach, and is essentially what is known as “insight” (*vipassanā*) into our existence.

4.3 THE 4 KINDS OF CLINGING [§§9-12]

4.3.1 Clinging and the fetters

4.3.1.1 The Cūḷa Sīha,nāda Sutta speaks of these 4 kinds of clinging (*upādāna*), that is, to sensual pleasures, to views, to rituals and vows, and to a self-doctrine [§9]. (Here, **self-doctrine**, *attā’nuvāda*, includes the “self-identity view,” *sakkāya,diṭṭhi*, but includes other self-based views as well.) These 4 kinds of clinging are actually an abridged or more compact form of the 5 lower fetters (*orambhāgiya saṃyojana*) [Fig 1.2], which fetter us to the “lower,” that is, the sense world, which we inhabit.

The 5 lower fetters (*oram,bhāgiya saṃyojana*)

- (1) self-identity view *sakkāya,diṭṭhi*
- (2) spiritual doubt *vicikicchā*
- (3) attachment to rituals & vows *sīla-b,bata,parāmaṣa*
- (4) sensual lust *kāma,rāga*
- (5) repulsion *paṭigha*¹²⁹

The 4 kinds of clinging (*upādāna*) [§§9-12]

- (1) clinging to sensual pleasures *kām’upādāna*
- (2) clinging to views *diṭṭh’upādāna*
- (3) clinging to rituals and vows *sīlabbat’upādāna*
- (4) clinging to a self-doctrine *atta,vād’upādāna*

Figure 4.3.1 The 4 kinds of clinging and the 5 fetters¹³⁰

4.3.1.2 From **Figure 4.3.1**, it is clear that the 4 kinds of clinging are a compact listing of the 5 lower fetters, the defilements that hold us back in the sense-world. The central role of the senses is clearly highlighted in the set of 4 kinds of clinging, with **sensual desire** placed first. We will notice here how sensual desire is the basis of the other kinds of clinging, that is, those of views, of ritual and vows, and of a self-doctrine.

These 4 kinds of clinging characterize all sense-based existence. All beings of the sense-world—such as human beings—are caught up with clinging in one or other, or more, of these 4 ways. First and foremost, however, as sense-based humans, all that we have are sense-based experiences. Hence, the senses play a key role in all these forms of clinging.¹³¹

After all, they are “all” that we have. Interestingly, **the Sabba Sutta** (S 35.23) states that the 6 “internal” sense-bases and their respective “external” sense-objects are the “all” (*sabba*), that is, respectively, our tools of knowing and what we can know.¹³²

4.3.1.3 So that’s all there is, that’s all we can *have*. Since we “have” them, so we think, we cling on to them. If we remain at this primal level (most of the time, we do, but do not know it), that’s all we see —“only things,” that is, something countable (that is, they can and must be appropriated) and external (to

¹²⁸ See **The unconscious**, SD 17.8b.

¹²⁹ In some sets, (5) (*paṭigha*) is replaced by “ill will” (*vyāpāda*).

¹³⁰ On a summary of how these relate to the 10 fetters, see **Kāma-c,chanda**, SD 32.1 (1.0).

¹³¹ See **Kāma-c,chanda**, SD 32.2.

¹³² S 35.23 (SD 7.1).

be “internalized,” accumulated and owned). These things become so familiar to us that we *name* them: we call the pleasant “likeable,” the unpleasant “unlikeable,” and the unfamiliar “boring.”

We do not want to let them go because we can only spend *moments* with them. We feel the unpleasant, and how difficult it is to tolerate. When the unpleasant fades away, we are relieved and feel good—this is pleasant. Pleasure, then is the momentary absence of pain, and pain is the momentary absence of pleasure. But we don’t really see this. So we try to collect the pleasant experiences and reject the unpleasant ones.

4.3.1.4 This, very simply, is just how we feel about things. We *feel* that a certain experience is pleasant when we *think* of it as related to a similar pleasant experience in the past. We *think* that something is unpleasant by relating it to something similar from the past. And if we fail to connect that present experience with anything from the past, we are simply unwilling or unable to connect with it, so we ignore it or we feel bored. It seems as if we are bereft of all feeling, and we are virtually dead within and to the world.

4.3.2 Clinging to views

4.3.2.1 This, then [4.3.1], is how we experience time, as **the pendulum** swinging back-and-forth between liking the pleasant and disliking the unpleasant, and ignoring the neutral. This creature reactivity began when we were children, perhaps before that, even from past lives: we are conditioned in the past and by our past—the child is father of the man.¹³³ This may refer to the sweet memories of the past, ambered in faded old photos or crinkled old letters.

4.3.2.2 But for most of us, especially when we habitually recall and relive past pains, the familiar hurt cloud us without any silver lining at all. We are like **Sisyphus**, condemned by the gods to pushing a round boulder up a steep hill to the peak, from where it rolls down again to the bottom. Sisyphus runs after it, and reaching it, pushes it upwards all over again. “The struggle itself towards the heights is enough to fill a man’s heart,” mused French author, **Albert Camus**, in his essay, *The Myth of Sisyphus* (1942). This ancient Greek myth personifies the absurdity of human life, but concludes, “One must imagine Sisyphus happy.”¹³⁴

4.3.2.3 Sisyphus’ boulder is a ball of congealed views and petrified emotions that we tirelessly take pride in, fixed in the notion that we have known it all, that there’s nothing more to learn. And yet, all our lives—we rarely recall—are like words in the sand on the water’s edge. We keep rewriting them as the tide of time washes them off. Each time we rewrite those words, the chances are that we will write new words, or even rewrite everything. See how our old memories change as we age. If we are happy, the memory’s pains become lessons of wisdom; if we remain bitter, they keep galling and eating us.

We are then like **the uroboros**, the snake that eats its own tail.¹³⁵ It feels the pain, and reacting to an imagined assailant, it bites harder, ever harder, even wrestling with itself. The only way we can stop the pain is to stop biting! Only we can hurt ourself most painfully, uselessly, more than anyone else, even those who try to hurt us, can. When we have learned to stop biting ourself, we stop clinging to the present, we stop craving for the past, we do need to hope for the future. We simply see pain or pleasure like rock-steps across the waters: we gingerly, even joyfully, step on them crossing to safety and peace.

4.3.3 Clinging to ritual and vows

4.3.3.1 The problem for most of us, however, is that we look forward with excitement to the ritual of rock-pushing in our life—like Sisyphus [4.3.2.2]. **A ritual** is a repetitive action done with some hope or belief that it’s good, or at least fun, for us. It is a rut in a loop, so that we keep going in the same circle. It prevents us from doing anything different or learning something new. In a perversely real way, we fear we are “not ourself” if we do not keep to this ritual: it defines us!

¹³³ This line is from William Wordsworth’s “My heart leaps up when I behold” (1802): “My heart leaps up when I behold | A rainbow in the sky: | So was it when my life began; | So it is now I am a man; | So be it when I shall grow old, | Or, let me die! | The Child is father of the man; | I could wish my days to be | Bound each to each by natural piety.” <http://www.bartleby.com/145/ww194.html>.

¹³⁴ SD 23.3 (1); SD 48.3 (1.2.2.2).

¹³⁵ SD 23.3 (1).

Many of us invest our time studying Buddhism with deep respect and curiosity. In due course, we are subtly drawn into the inner circles of a Buddhist centre or temple, where its wealthy and powerful wardens pronounce their fiats on everyone and what goes on (or not) in its name—this is the Buddhism we often see today. These religious memes¹³⁶ simply seduce us—the better amongst us that catch the wardens’ eye—unless we are wisely familiar enough with memes to keep our distance. So we allow ourselves to “serve” Buddhism under them, so that we are caught up in its social and religious cycle of rituals and vows. We are then mere slaves enriching them, but all the poorer in our quest for the Dharma.

4.3.3.2 A Buddhist centre or temple is meaningful and purposeful as long as it aspires to study, practise, promote, and realize the Buddha’s true teachings. Less than this, it would be promoting only some cultural, ethnic, or personal form of Buddhism. Its purpose, then, is clearly to promote its own cultural or personal vision, which may not be bad, if it also warmly and rightfully accommodates early the Dharma as the personal goals of its members.

4.3.3.3 All the rituals and vows we can perform, even over many lives, will only keep us to more lives, but not necessarily better ones. Rituals tend to delude us into believing that we have such a firm grip on things or the truths that they point to, so that we easily mistake the rituals themselves for the truth. In this way, rituals actually make us forget what the Dharma is really about. If rituals are merely repetitive and cyclic actions of body, speech, and mind, they are but a rut we have fallen into, either to impress others with an external display, or to blindside ourselves from the real issues as the world burns around us.

4.3.3.4 Vows, as aspirations for awakening as taught by the historical Buddha, can healthily serve us to effect that vision. Such a vow is both inspired and inspiring, an effective engagement in the study and practice of the Dharma, where wisdom is moved by compassion, and compassion lived with wisdom. We might even aspire to become buddhas, the noblest of Buddhist vows.

But, if we, in the same mind or breath, say that even the arhats must become Buddhas, then we have turned our backs to the Buddha. Surely, warns the suttas, we would fall into the herds, a very crowded life, such as that of the animals; and if we were to entice others, too, with such a wrong view, we would fall into the thickest crowd of all, even in this life itself.¹³⁷

4.3.4 Clinging to a self-doctrine

4.3.4.1 A crowd never really knows where it is going. A crowd’s view is a crowded one. If we are caught in a crowd, then we cannot see beyond our noses; indeed, not even beyond our eyes, or ears, or tongue, or our body. Since a crowd is also mindless, we are unlikely to use our minds, either. So, we are being led only by our senses: this is an instinctual life, an unthinking, cycle of primal sense-reactions. A crowd acts on its instincts; for, that is all it has, a collective instinct; hence, a crowd does not think.

The crowd’s collective view can only be of a collective self, an exclusive tribe. If the tribe is our self, then, we can only think as a crowd (an oxymoron, a self-contradiction). When a tribe tries to think, it sees only itself. Hence, as a member of a tribe, we can only move, act or speak as a tribe. We have no more heart—the crowd has only a heart of darkness that chains its members to its numbers.

4.3.4.2 Although **the Buddha’s sangha**, community of monastics, is literally a “herd,” it is one that keeps to the safe pasture¹³⁸ of moral virtue and mental cultivation.¹³⁹ Interestingly, to be a member of such a herd, we actually have to leave the worldly crowd and the biological family. Once we are true members of this spiritual community, we leave behind the biological family and see the whole world as a spiritual family and classless community,¹⁴⁰ so that we are accessible (*opanayika*)¹⁴¹ to anyone and everyone who is troubled by the crowd or tribe, and who wants to become a true individual.¹⁴²

¹³⁶ See **Memes**, SD 26.3.

¹³⁷ D 10,2.33.2, SD 40.13; **Lohicca S** (D 12,10 etc) + SD 34.8 (3); M 57,3/1:388 + SD 23.11 (5.1.3).

¹³⁸ On the safe pasture, see **Makkāṭṭa S** (S 47.7,12), SD 41.7.

¹³⁹ These are the first 2 of the 3 trainings, the third being that of wisdom: see **Sīla samādhī paññā**, SD 21.6.

¹⁴⁰ On the sangha being “classless” (*vevaṇṇiya*) and not a tribe (like a church), see **Pabbajita Abhiṅga S** (A 10.-48,2(1)), SD 48.9.

¹⁴¹ On *opanayika*, see SD 15.9 (2.5).

4.3.4.3 Although identifying with a group, we see ourself as being above others, above the law, a sort of a narcissist, sui generis [4.3.4.4]. This is probably the kind of personality that the “part-time monks”¹⁴³ or pseudo-monastics of our times, who resort to wearing civvies (lay clothes) when they go gambling or gallivanting, and slipping back into their robes when they are performing professional rituals, or collecting donations, or to make their presence felt.¹⁴⁴

How is it that such part-time monks or career priests can disrespect the robe without compunction or fear of bad painful karmic fruits? Clearly, such tartuffes place their self-importance above everyone and everything else, even above the Dharma. They identify only with themselves: this is a manifestation of the self-identity view. Because they do not fear any karmic retribution, clearly they do not believe in karma, and perhaps not even in Buddhism itself! They have become virtuosi con artists, spivs, living on the pious and the gullible.

4.3.4.4 Then we have the case of a **morally weak leader**. Although he has some narcissistic qualities, he seems to have some instinctive respect for the Dharma. He appears diligent in Buddhist work, especially those he has initiated or are in his charge, and enjoys the attention he commands. He may be from the inner circle of Buddhist leaders, but has little experience in Dharma study or practice, but this does not stop him from giving talks, quoting sources as his own without due credit, and so on, so that he is perceived as being knowledgeable, even an expert.

When preaching, he even tells off-colour jokes or make inappropriate remarks, aimed at impressing his audience, and to ensure that he is on the top of things. However, the fact remains that he is no better than a crafty schoolboy who, not having done his homework, lifts the work of others, and presents them for his own, feeling that the end justifies the means.

While such a morally weak leader tries to impress us with his speech and actions, the true Dharma speaker seeks only to inspire us in the Dharma. The weak leader draws attention to himself, while the Dharma speaker directs us to the Dharma.

The weak leader tends to use teachings only to promote himself, while the true teacher experiences the Dharma and inspires us with it. Using the terminology of **theatre semiotics**, the weaker leader’s approach is said to be a kind of representational preaching while the true teacher’s approach is simply a presentational teaching.¹⁴⁵ The latter is, of course, what we should emulate.

4.3.4.5 The weak leader often expects everyone he meets to fall within the gravity field of his self-propelled small talk and network. If anyone, even for good reason, does not want to engage with him, he is likely to see that person as one who is “rude” or “cannot change.” In fact, he is convinced that those whom he dislikes or those who do not like him must be those who “cannot change”! We know from the suttas, that even the patricide king Ajātasattu could change,¹⁴⁶ just as Devadatta (who made attempts on the Buddha’s life) can change, even become a pratyeka-buddha in due course.¹⁴⁷

The point is that **change** is a universal characteristic of being. If not for change, we will not awaken to true reality. Only when we accept and see change and impermanence for what they really are, would

¹⁴² On becoming an individual or individuation, see SD 8.7 (4). On the true individual, see **Sappurisa S** (M 113), SD 23.7; **Bāla Paṇḍita S** (M 129,27-50), SD 2.22..

¹⁴³ **Sela S** (M 92 ~ Sn 3.7) records the conversion of the part-time matted-hair ascetic Keniya: SD 45.7a (4.3).

Nanda Gopālaka Vatthu (DhA 3.8) is an account of a part-time cowherd, guarding Anāthapiṇḍika’s cattle, to protect his own great wealth: SD 100.7.

¹⁴⁴ See Reflection, “False ‘false monastics’ and true ‘false monastics’,” R8, 2007 (*Simple Joys* 1, 2007 ch 14.2).

¹⁴⁵ Essentially, presentation is simply showing, like bowing down before a Buddha image or a teacher as a gesture of respect. Representation is showing with another meaning behind it. We bring flowers to the shrine to venerate the Buddha. Representation symbolizes something else, below the surface of what we are presenting, such as teaching in a theatrical or entertaining manner to impress or win over the audience. Here, the intention is a negative one, usually a hidden agenda. Such terms are helpful in shaping and understanding modern Buddhist homiletics. On theatre semiotics, see Keir Elam, *The Semiotics of Theatre and Drama*, London: Methuen, 1980:12, 55-57.

¹⁴⁶ See **Sāmañña,phala S** (D 2,101-102), SD 8.10.

¹⁴⁷ Devadatta is prophesied to become a pratyeka-buddha, named Aṭṭhissara, at the end of 100,000 world-cycles (Miln 111; DhA 1:148). See **Devadatta**, SD 71.4.

we attain streamwinning, the first stage of the path to awakening. Everyone changes, and should change, for the better. Ever the weak can change for the better through the Dharma.

4.3.4.6 These are not pleasant stories to tell or read about but is likely to recur in our midst—to remain silent on such awkward and unwholesome realities is to allow them to be repeated and to grow insidiously and unchecked. Such misguided self-centred behaviour is fed by a gullible admiring crowd, intoxicated with perceived power or charisma or external qualities. Such a problem can only worsen in time—unless it is exposed with skill and compassion.

For, the wrong that this generation does, might be deemed as acceptable, an excuse, even inspiration, for greater licence in the following generations of misguided self-centred personalities. When family abuse is allowed to go on in silence, its members often end up as co-dependents.¹⁴⁸ The healing only starts with the courage to speak up, and to change things. Māra is defeated when he is identified and exposed.¹⁴⁹

4.3.5 Full understanding

4.3.5.1 The Sutta goes on to say that some “recluses and brahmins ... although claiming to fully understand the doctrine of all clingings, do not rightly declare a **full understanding**¹⁵⁰ of all the clingings” [§10]. If they have full understanding of clinging, they would *not* have any of the 4 kinds of clinging. Through their own ignorance, they are overwhelmed by one or more of the 4 kinds of clinging without even knowing it, or they are incapable of resolving the problem.

Take, for example, the widespread molestation of the young by Catholic priests and prelates has gone on for centuries, but the Church is unable to stop such a serious problem. Instead, the ongoing problem is condoned, even by the highest church officials who knew about it. The Church is still powerful within and well organized, but because of sensual lust and the lack of Church teaching to really correct such a problem, it can only try to maintain general silence.¹⁵¹ [3.1.3.3]

4.3.5.2 Western Buddhism, too, has its dark **shadows** of numerous cases of sexual abuse and misappropriation of funds by well known Zen masters and by charismatic Vajrayana gurus in the US in the 1990s, and a Western cult guru in England around the same time. The common denominator in these tragic cases was a religious cultish system centering on a single “perfect” guru, and a lack of social space between the clergy and the laity. The lack of moral standards and discipline, and western openness to sexuality, in these groups, allowed, even encouraged, these teachers and their followers in such licence. Despite everything, they themselves were simply unable to overcome their clinging to sensual pleasures.

When a sensei, tulku or guru miscondacted himself sexually with his followers, this is construed as “skillful means” to expedite their spiritual development, showing the guru’s “compassion.” These are, of course, serious wrong views, but these can be difficult to see, much less avoided or corrected, mainly because of a lack of moral will on the part of either or both the clergy or the laity.

4.3.5.3 Furthermore, such systems are strongly centred on **ritual and vows**, which, in important ways, define and hold them together. Such an externalized means of religious reinforcement of faith help to legitimize the subservience and docility of devotees to the clergy, so that there is practically no need for any *personal accountability* [3.1.3.3] regard the devotees’ actions.

The arrangement is that as long as we, the laity, serve and support the clergy, we accumulate merits, which cancels our bad karma, or at least forestall them indefinitely, so it seems. Ironically, then, rituals and vows, practised without moral wisdom, actually end up as a sublime means of denial of the painful realities around us, even within us.

4.3.5.4 The senseis, tulkus, and gurus themselves, partly because of their high titles and ritual status, assume a bigger-than-life, even idolized, position that kept their followers in awe and deference. Rooted in such strong self-doctrines, it was almost impossible for such power-figures to see themselves as ever

¹⁴⁸ On dependence and co-dependence, see **Samāṇa Gadrabha S** (A 3.81), SD 24.10B (2.4.1).

¹⁴⁹ The usual phrase Māra utters when discovered is, “(He) knows me!” (*jānāti maṃ*): see the first 20 suttas (on the Buddha) of **Māra Saṃyutta** (S 4), except S 4.5, and on the monk Samiddhi (S 4.22); and all 10 suttas on the nuns, **Bhikkhuṇī Saṃy** (S 5.1-10). Having been discovered, Māra then flees.

¹⁵⁰ See §9 n.

¹⁵¹ See SD 17.3 (2.3); also Wikipedia, “[Roman Catholic sex abuse cases](#).”

committing any moral wrong, since they believed they have attained some high religious state, a belief shared by their followers.¹⁵² These senseis, tulkus, and gurus are seen as being above right and wrong, good and bad—they have become cult figures.

Knowledgeable, famous, or wealthy as these teachers may be, but as the Cūḷa Sīhanāda Sutta warns us, if we only understand partially the 4 kinds of clinging [§§9-12], or not at all, we will make no effort to correct things or better ourselves as teachers. We would then be ineffective teachers, who are likely to mislead, even harm, others. As the Buddha warns us, “Even famous teachers can have wrong views.”¹⁵³

4.3.5.5 The Sutta Commentary explains “**full understanding**” (*pariññā*) [§10] as meaning the overcoming or transcending (*samatikkama*) defilements, with regard to the notion of “full understanding as abandonment (of defilements)” (*pahāna, pariññā*) (MA 1:29). This is the third of the 3 types of full understanding (*pariññā*), that is, of (1) the known (*ñāta, pariññā*), (2) by scrutinization (*tīraṇa, pariññā*), and (3) by abandonment (*pahāna, pariññā*). Anyone who fully understands the true nature of things, do so by way of these 3 kinds of full understanding:

(1) “**Full understanding of the known**” (*ñāta, pariññā*), say, of the earth element, means that we understand the definition of the earth element by way of its unique characteristics, functions, manifestation, and proximate cause.

(2) “**Full understanding by scrutinization**” (*tīraṇa, pariññā*) refers to the contemplation of the earth element by way of the 3 general characteristics of impermanence, unsatisfactoriness and non-self.

(3) “**Full understanding that is abandonment**” (*pahāna, pariññā*) is the abandoning of desire and lust for the earth element through the supreme path (that is, arhathood). (MA 1:29)

4.3.5.6 The earth element here is, of course, the first of **the 4 primary elements** (*mahā, dhātu*), the rest being the water element, the fire element and the wind (or air) element. Our physical being comprises these elements: our solid and “resistant” aspects of the “earth” element; most of our body is liquid of various kinds, the “water” element; our body-heat *digests* our food, *energizes* us, and also *burns* as inner “fire” (that is, oxidation and decay); and our breath is the “wind” element, as are our peristalsis and bodily movements. This is a reflection into the true nature of our physical being and its interbeing with the external elements themselves.¹⁵⁴

4.4 HOW THE DHARMA-VINAYA IS TAUGHT [§§13-15]

4.4.1 The Buddha then goes on to explain why in any religion or system, faith in the teacher, faith in the teaching, moral virtue and spiritual fellowship have “not been rightly pointed out” (*na samma-g, gato akkhāyati*) [§13.1]. The reason for this is because their teaching has not been properly taught, that is, without any full understanding of the 4 kinds of clinging: to sensual pleasures, to views, to ritual and vows, and to a self-doctrine. [4.3]

4.4.2 The Buddha has, in the suttas, given us a full explanation of these 4 kinds of clinging. Hence, such a teaching and discipline are “well shown [well-taught], well expounded, leading to liberation, bringing about stillness, declared by one fully self-awakened” [§15.2]. The 4 kinds of clinging, when, given up, even partially, can lead us at least to streamwinning, and when fully abandoned, brings about arhathood.

4.5 THE DEPENDENT ARISING AND DEPENDENT ENDING OF CLINGING [§§16-18]

4.5.0 The closing exhortation

4.5.0.1 The Cūḷa Sīhanāda Sutta closes with an instructive exposition on **the dependent arising of the 4 kinds of clinging** [§16]. Dependent arising is schematically represented as follows (in the reverse sequence), with the sign “←” (left arrow) reading as “is/are dependent on.”¹⁵⁵

¹⁵² Fortunately, after the worst of these was over, an Ethics Committee was formed in 1992, followed by other similar efforts to prevent any repeat of such aberrations and abuses. See **Bad friendship**, SD 64.17: the Vajrayana scandal (5); the Zen scandal (6-7). See also **Cult Buddhism**, SD 34.5: on Sangharakshita and the Friends of the Western Buddhist Order, see (1.2.2).

¹⁵³ A 5.88 @ SD 40a.16.

¹⁵⁴ See **Mahā Rāhul’ovāda S** (M 62), M 62,8-17/1:421-426 @ SD 3.11; also SD 17.2a (2).

¹⁵⁵ See also **Dependent arising**, SD 5.16.

The 4 kinds of clinging ← craving ← feeling ← contact ← the 6 sense-bases ← name-and-form
← consciousness ← formations ← ignorance. [§16]

The ultimate root of clinging is ignorance [§16 (8)], traditionally defined as not comprehending the 4 noble truths, that is, the 4 noble truths, not as academic mastery, but as experiential insight. In between clinging and ignorance, there are seven other connecting stages (craving, feeling, etc), each proximate cause of the preceding link.

4.5.0.2 The dependent ending of clinging is briefly stated, thus: “when ignorance is abandoned, true knowledge arises.” Such a person does not have any clinging at all [§17], and goes on to fully awaken as an arhat [§18]. This is the sort of cognitive series which details how clinging arises on account the preceding condition, which is analyzed in some practical detail [4.5.1-4.5.9].

4.5.0.3 The dependent arising sequence of the Cūḷa Sīha,nāda Sutta lists only 9 of the traditional 12 links. Omitted are links (10) existence, (11) birth, and (12) decay-and-death. Existence is the last link in our present existence, and also the last of karmic process sequence, thus (in the forward sequence):

Ignorance → formations → consciousness → name-and-form → the 6 sense-bases → contact
→ feeling → craving [→ existence → birth → decay-and-death]. [SD 5.16, Table 8a]

4.5.1 “The 4 kinds of clinging have craving as their source” [§16 (1)]

4.5.1.1 Whatever clinging we have—whether to sensual pleasures, to views, to rituals and vows, or to a self-doctrine—is the direct result of our **craving**. This is a sense of “lack” that we conjure up by measuring ourselves against others, coveting what others have that we think we lack, and to feel displeasure when we fail to get what we want, or to be dissatisfied with what we get.

Craving, then, is wanting more and more, not knowing when to stop, until we have (we think) got what we wanted. Then, we cling to that object which seems to satisfy our craving. The irony is that if we are really satisfied (like finishing a delicious meal), we will not want some more, we will not cling to our craving. But we almost always actually cling to our cravings—we want more. This is simply because, we are not really satisfied. This is why we keep on craving.

4.5.1.2 Covetousness (*abhijjhā*) and displeasure (*domanassa*), on a mental or cognitive level, work as mental hindrances, distracting us from inner peace and real happiness. In fact, this pair is a synecdoche for **the 5 mental hindrances** (*pañca,nīvaraṇa*), where they are the first two hindrances, and called sensual desire (*kāma-c,chanda*) and ill will (*vyāpāda*).

4.5.1.3 This demanding duality of liking and disliking works to overwhelm us with sloth and torpor (*thīna,middha*): we are sapped of both mental and physical energy, we are left running to-and-fro between them. Otherwise, we fall into restlessness and remorse (*uddhacca,kukkucca*), thinking about past pains and losses, and anticipating future pleasures and gains. All such activities, being actively speculative, habitually leave us doubting even ourselves. These are the 5 mental hindrances.¹⁵⁶

4.5.1.4 On an existential level—how we exist and continue to relive our existence—craving acts in a more specific role of fettering us to sensual desire (*kāma-c,chanda*) and its twin, repulsion (*paṭigha*), the 4th and the 5th of **the 10 mental fetters** (*dasa saṃyojana*)¹⁵⁷ [1.2]. Their positions amongst the mental fetters make good sense: they mark the frontiers of the sense world. If we are able to fully transcend them we will be able to attain the dhyana.

The habitual experience of the form dhyanas or the formless attainments is beneficial—essentially, it mean that we are able to transcend the mental limits set by our physical senses. In such deep meditation, we are effectively in a purely mental world. Upon dying, we will be reborn in a form world or a formless world. However, the Buddha unequivocally advises us to apply our dhyana-based calm and insight to see

¹⁵⁶ On the 5 mental hindrances, see *Nīvaraṇa*, SD 32.1.

¹⁵⁷ The first 3 fetters are self-identity view [1.3.4], spiritual doubt (closely related to clinging to views) [Fig 4.3.1; 4.3.2], and attachment to ritual and vows [4.3.3].

impermanence and true reality as the basis for overcoming all views, especially that of self-identity, so that we awaken on the path to nirvana.¹⁵⁸

4.5.1.5 Clearly, then, craving is the most radical (root-cause) of all defilements. Hence, it is also the very first of the 3 unwholesome roots (*akusala, mūla*), that is, greed (*lobha*), hatred (*dosa*) and delusion (*moha*). Note that “hatred” (a more general form of displeasure and repulsion), its opposite, is the second unwholesome root. Delusion is inherent in both, feeding both greed and hatred.

On a very deep unconscious¹⁵⁹ level, we have the latent tendencies (*anusaya*), of which there are usually 7, that is, those of sensual lust, of aversion, of conceit, of views, of doubt, of lust for existence, and of ignorance.¹⁶⁰ These can be summarized into 3, as lust, aversion and ignorance, that is, they are literally a more radical form of the 3 unwholesome roots (which lurks in our preconscious mind).¹⁶¹

Delusion, then, is an active form of ignorance [4.5.8], that is fed and manipulated by feeling (hedonic evaluation) [4.5.2], which, in its turn, feeds craving, as we shall see. [4.5.2]

4.5.2 “Craving has feeling as its source” [§16 (2)]

4.5.2.1 Delusion, we have noted, is an activity of ignorance [4.5.8], we might even say that it is ignorance in action. This activity is fed by feeling as stated in the Sutta [§16]. If we are ignorant, it may mean that we have never heard of the 4 noble truths, much less understand what they mean. To be deluded, simply means that we “think” we know the 4 noble truths, or we are “sure” that we have understood them. Yet we are not fully awakened, we still have greed, hate and delusion. This means that our delusion keeps us from fully understanding the truths and so we remain unawakened.

4.5.2.2 We have already noted that **craving** means wanting more and more, and not knowing when to stop, because we are not really satisfied [4.5.1.1]. What is it that keeps us wanting more, keeping us unsatiated? The short answer is feeling (*vedanā*). What we understand in everyday English as “experience” closely describes “feeling” or hedonic evaluation, the verb of which is *paṭisaṃvedeti*, resolved as *paṭi-* (a prefix meaning “towards”) + *saṃ-* (a prefix—here as an infix—meaning “together”) + *vid-* (“to know” + *e* (signifying a causative form) + *ti* (present tense, indicative active, 3rd person singular)

4.5.2.3 From this word analysis and stymology, we can see that *paṭisaṃvedeti* has a root sense of knowing, but in a passive way of approaching a sense-object, mixing together with it. In other words, it means “experience, feel, enjoy, suffer, undergo.”

Note that it refers to a thoroughly **affective** experience, where although “knowing” occurs, there is almost no sense of “thinking” present. It is almost a direct experience of the sense-objects, but it is too involved with the objects to be “objective,” that is, it fails to see them merely as objects of the 6 sense-bases (the eye, ear, nose, tongue, body and mind). Indeed, we may say that the initial prefix *paṭi-* suggests that *paṭisaṃvedeti* is, as a rule, a rather subjective experience.

4.5.2.4 It is this subjective aspect of **feeling** (*vedanā*, a noun form of *paṭisaṃvedeti*) that makes it the proximate cause of craving. We do not just *feel* an experience: we evaluate it as “pleasant” (if it reminds us of a similar past experience), as “unpleasant” (if it reminds us of a painful past), or we ignore it or see it as “neutral” or “boring,” when we are unable to evaluate or measure it because we have no past experience to relate it to. Feeling, then, “tastes,” “relishes,” measures and collects, or rejects various experiences that it subjectifies.¹⁶²

4.5.3 “Feeling has contact as its source” [§16 (3)]

4.5.3.1 Feeling itself arises on account of the senses, which is technically called **contact** (*phassa*), or sense-impression, or sense-stimuli. This is when we direct our attention to any of our 6 sense-bases [4.5.4], or we are “stimulated” by any of these eye-contact, ear-contact, nose-contact, tongue-contact,

¹⁵⁸ See, esp **Saṅkhār’upapatti S**, (M 120) SD 3.4; **Samanupassanā S** (S 22.47,7.2), self-identity views overcome, SD 26.12. See also the Buddha’s reproach of Sāriputta in **Dhānañjāni S** (M 97,38), SD 4.9.

¹⁵⁹ See **The unconscious**, SD 17.8b.

¹⁶⁰ Respectively, *rāgānusaya*, *paṭighānusaya*, *mānānusaya*, *diṭṭhānusaya*, *vicikicchā, nusaya*, *bhāvānusaya*, *anijjānusaya*: see **Anusaya**, SD 31.3.

¹⁶¹ On “preconscious” and related terms, see SD 17.8a (6.1).

¹⁶² For more details, see **Vedanā**, SD 17.3.

body-contact and mind-contact¹⁶³ [4.5.4.1]. In other words, we have a triad of sense-faculty, sense-object and sense-consciousness.¹⁶⁴

4.5.3.2 Attention needs to be present for sense-contact to arise. Take, for example, someone is talking to us, but we are worried about something else. Although we are listening to the words and sounds of the person, we are unable to make any sense of it, because our attention is directed elsewhere. In karmic terms, this is less an act of listening (not a bodily karma), but more of a mental karma of worrying or restlessness (*uddhacca*).

Even when we are not paying attention, we are still creating karma, one rooted in delusion. Such karma will still be able bear fruit. If we are unmindful once, we are likely to be unmindful again, and this begins to affect our mindfulness, so that we go on to commit worse karma. Mindfulness, then, is a vital habit we must cultivate in terms of the 4 right efforts, that is, restraining oneself in keeping an undone bad action so, in abandoning bad actions that have arisen, in cultivating unarisen good actions, and maintaining the arisen good actions.¹⁶⁵

4.5.3.3 This gives us an important clue into mental training. If we are mindful enough, we will be able to nip a negative action in the bud. The moment we notice any “sign” (*nimitta*) of a bad action, we at once direct the mind to a more wholesome object, before the mind “proliferates” into countless thoughts by looking at the negative “details” (*anuvyañjana*) amongst the thoughts. This is the practice of sense-restraint.¹⁶⁶ [Cf 4.5.6.1]

4.5.4 “Contact has the 6 sense-bases as its source” [§16 (4)]

4.5.4.1 Behind every contact (*phassa*) is a sense-base causing it: the eye, ear, nose, tongue, body, and mind—collectively called the “6 sense-bases” (*saḷ,āyatana*; Skt *ṣaḍ,āyatana*) [4.5.3.1]. Technically, these are the “internal” sense-bases (*ajjhattika āyatana*), while the sense-objects are known as the “external” sense-bases (*bāhira āyatana*).¹⁶⁷ Each of the 5 physical senses (*pañc’indriya*)¹⁶⁸ is said to be made up of the 4 primary elements (earth, water, fire, and wind)¹⁶⁹ and each responds to external stimuli (*sa-p,paṭigha*) (Vbh 70 f).

The mind-base (*manāyatana*), on the other hand, is a collective term for all consciousnesses whatsoever, and should not be confused with the mind-element (*mano,dhātu*), which performs only the functions of advertence (*āvajjana*) to the sense-object, and of receiving (*sampañicchana*) the sense-object. This is only a brief description of the human cognitive process.¹⁷⁰

4.5.4.2 In the sutta teachings, the sense-bases are collectively referred to as the “5 faculties” (*pañc’indriya*) or what we call “**the body**,” or more technically, “this body endowed with consciousness” (*sa-viññāna,kāya*), or simply “this conscious body.” Two explanations obtain here. [4.5.4.2+4.5.4.3]

Firstly, the organ itself is distinguished from the sense-faculty; for example, the eye is called *akkhi*, but as a sense-faculty, “with its consciousness” (*sa,viññānaka*), is called *cakkhu*. The ear as a mere organ is *kaṇṇā*; as a sense-faculty is *sota*. The nose as a mere organ is *nāsā*; as a sense-faculty, *ghana*. The tongue (*jīvha*), the body (*kāya*) and the mind (*mano*) have the same name either way.¹⁷¹

The 5 senses “with consciousness,” then, are sense-faculties (*indriya*). Of these faculties, **the Mahā Vedalla Sutta** (M 43) says that each has its own field, none of them partaking of another sense-field; they

¹⁶³ On contact (*phassa*), see **Dependent arising**, SD 5.16; as proximate condition for feeling, perception, and volitional formations, see **Hālidakāni S 1** (S 22.3), SD 10.12; **Nagara S** (S 12.65), SD 14.2; **Naḷa,kalāpiya S** (S 12.67), SD 83.11.

¹⁶⁴ For an interesting explanation in terms of perception, see **Madhu,piṇḍika S** (M 18,16-17), SD 6.14.

¹⁶⁵ See **Catu Padhāna**, SD 10.2.

¹⁶⁶ See **Nimitta & anuvyañjana**, SD 19.14.

¹⁶⁷ See **Salāyatana Vibhaṅga S** (M 137,4), SD 29.5.

¹⁶⁸ On the 5 physical senses, see SD 17.2a (9.2).

¹⁶⁹ Essentially this means that the eye, etc, comprise solidity, fluidity, heat and motion. On the 4 primary elements (*mahā,bhūta*), see SD 17.2a (2).

¹⁷⁰ For details on the cognitive process (*viññāna,kicca*), see SD 19.14 (2). This is only part of the mental process (*citta,vīthi*), see Abhs: BRS 4.1-30/149-184 (ch 4).

¹⁷¹ On the senses as organ and as faculty, see SD 17.2a (9).

all are conditioned by vitality (*āyu*), which is, in turn, conditioned by heat (*usmā*), and heat again by vitality, just as the light and flame of a burning lamp are mutually conditioned.¹⁷²

The mind (*mano*) has its own mental objects (*dhamma*), that is, thought, memory, imagination and the input of the 5 physical senses. The 6 sense-bases (*saḷ-āyatana*), then, are conditioned by the conscious body (*sa, viññānaka, kāya*), and in the case of humans, they can only exist in such a body.

4.5.4.3 Secondly, each **sense-faculty** “senses” or experiences its own range (*go, cara*) and field (*vi-saya*). The eye faculty, for example, senses only light, shapes, forms and colours, but not the three-dimensional thing out there. The ear faculty senses only sounds and vibrations; the nose faculty, only smells; the tongue faculty, only tastes; and the body faculty, only touches (and resistance), temperature, texture (hardness and softness), and weight.¹⁷³

Table 4.5. The sense-faculties and objects

	Faculty	Object	
eye	<i>cakkhu</i>	<i>rūpa</i>	form
ear	<i>sota</i>	<i>sadda</i>	sound
nose	<i>ghana</i>	<i>gandha</i>	smell
tongue	<i>jīvhā</i>	<i>rasa</i>	taste
body	<i>kāya</i>	<i>phoṭṭhabba</i>	touch
mind	<i>mano</i>	<i>dhamma</i>	thought

The mind-object-base (*dhamm'āyatana*) is identical with the “mind-object-element” (*dhamma, dhātu* or *dhamm'ārammaṇa*). It may be physical (any of the 5 senses) or mental, past, present or future, real or imaginary. While each of the 5 physical senses has its own range or field, the mind, too, has its own field, one which can create images of any of the other 5 senses, or go on to stimulate the respective senses.

The sutta viewpoint is that synaesthesia is purely a mental experience, but the scientific explanation seems to be that the mind stimulates the relevant senses (hence, it may be said to be a physical experience). However, either way, they are both actually personal and *mental* experiences, experienced only by the person himself.¹⁷⁴

4.5.4.4 **Synaesthesia** is a neurologically based phenomenon in which stimulation of one sensory or cognitive pathway leads to automatic, involuntary experiences in a second sensory or cognitive pathway. None of the individual sense-ranges or sense-fields overlaps any other, that is, the eye only senses sight, the ear, only sounds; the nose, smells; the tongue, tastes; and the body, touches; and the mind, thoughts. None of them experiences the range or field of another.¹⁷⁵

Hence, technically, speaking **synaesthesia** is not a physical sense-experience (no one else with that person experiences them). It is a mental experience. Hence, even though we speak of a savant “hearing colours,” for example, it really means when he hears certain sounds, his mind interprets them as colours, as if “coded” or conditioned to do so. This is clearly stated in **the Mahā Vedalla Sutta** (M 43).¹⁷⁶

4.5.5 “The 6 sense-bases have name-and-form as their source” [§16 (5)]

4.5.5.1 We have already noted that the senses only experience their respective “fields”: the eye, for example, only senses vision, that is, light, shapes, forms and colours, but not the three-dimensional things themselves out there [4.5.4.3]. We do know, however, that there are real “things” out there; things do not disappear when we go away. They are real in the sense that we do sense or experience them at least *indir-*

¹⁷² M 43,22/1:295 @ SD 30.2.

¹⁷³ On the 4 elements, see SD 17.2a (4-6).

¹⁷⁴ On the “12 senses” (the 6 sense-faculties and the 6 sense-objects), see SD 17.2a (9).

¹⁷⁵ See SD 29.3 (2).

¹⁷⁶ M 43,21/1:295 @ SD 30.2.

ectly. We “see” them as forms (*rūpa*) because they constantly vex (*ruppanti*) us, that is, bring on pain and undergo change.¹⁷⁷

4.5.5.2 The 6 sense-bases neither exist nor function in themselves, but do so by interacting with the external world. The mind does not directly sense the world when it is mediated by language—this is called thinking (*vitakka*). It tells us *about* the world as we experience it. As a rule, this is an inner chatter, a discursive appraisal of the sense-objects, projecting, filtering, and colouring them as we desire them.

Hence, we are not really experiencing the world; we are merely taking snapshots of the world in 5 or 6 ways, and editing and revising them according to our biases and inclinations (especially greed, hate, delusion and fear). Concentration or stillness begins when this inner chatter stops. Then, we experience the mental object directly, and in simple terms, this is called “focus” or samadhi.

4.5.5.3 *Nāma,rūpa*—literally, “mind-body,” is a twin compound for the mental and physical constituents of our person, with “**name**” (*nāma*) subsuming the four mental aggregates (*khandha*) of feeling (*vedanā*), perception (*saññā*), formations or conditioning factors (*sankhārā*), and consciousness (*viññāṇa*), and “**form**” (*rūpa*) referring to the material aggregate, that is, the physical body.

The word “**mind**” is generally used as a collective name for the four mental groups (*arūpino khandha*), that is, feeling (*vedanā*), perception, mental formations (*sankhāra*) and consciousness (*viññāṇa*). The 6 senses, through the mind, not only **knows**—but it *assembles or creates*—an experience. They also **feel** (directly experience) it, perceive it, deliberate on it, and is generally conscious of what goes on in the mind. The mind, in other words, can know or see itself. [4.5.5.5]

4.5.5.4 In both Pali and Sanskrit, *nāma,rūpa* literally means “name-and-form,” “mind-and-matter,” “mentality and materiality.” The term *nāma,rūpa* occurs most commonly as the 4th link in the formula of dependent arising (*paṭicca,samuppāda*), where it applies only to karma-resultant (*vipāka*) feeling, perception and a few karma-resultant mental functions that are inseparable from any consciousness (*viññāṇa*). In simpler terms, we see a “form,” but can only process it by giving it a “name.”

During the rebirth process, name-and-form refer to the 5 aggregates of a new lifetime at the moment of conception, that is, when the consciousness from the previous lifetime enters the womb. In this context, “name” would be the consciousness that has “descended” into the womb from the previous lifetime, and “form” would be the embryo that it inhabits.¹⁷⁸ [4.5.6.2]

4.5.5.5 **The Mahā Nidāna Sutta** (D 15) describes two basic mental activities. First, there is **sense-impression** (*paṭigha,samphassa*). *Paṭigha* means “resistance,” and here refers to the physical senses which, as it were, “resist” the streams of sense-objects—they are impacted or stimulated by them. This is how we see, hear, smell, taste, and touch things. Each of this is the “form” (*rūpa*) of our experience, as they occur on the physical level.

Secondly, the mind experiences these physical sensations (here, simply meaning the act of sensing) and also experiences itself (mental states): it makes sense of them by “naming” them, that is, projecting past experiences onto them so that they are familiar to us. Then, we evaluate them by way of “feeling” [4.5.3]. This process is called **conceptual impression** (*adhivacana,samphassa*).¹⁷⁹

4.5.5.6 Name and form (*nāma,rūpa*) rely upon each other, like a lame man (name) being carried on the shoulders of a blind man (form), and together they are able to move about. Because of this reciprocal

¹⁷⁷ Comys: “‘it is vexed,’ hence be troubling” (*ruppato iti ghaṭṭiyamānassa*, SA 1:289 ad S 1:198); “‘he vexes’ means to be agitated, troubled, oppressed, broken” (*ruppantīti kuppanti ghaṭṭiyati pīliyati bhijjātīti attho*, SA 2:290 ad S 3:80); “‘he is vexed’ means he is oppressed” (*ruppanti iti pīliyati*, SnA 513 ad Sn 767); “‘they are vexed’ means they are afflicted” (*ruppantīti bādhiyanti*, SnA 603 ad Sn 1121); “‘he is agitated, being troubled, being , oppressed. distressed on account of illness” (*kuppanti ghaṭṭiyati pīliyati byādhitō domanassito*, Nm 5 ad Sn 767 & Nc 228 ad Sn 1121); “‘it is vexed’ means that it has committed bodily deformation” (*ruppato iti sarīra,vikāraṃ āpajjato* (ThaA 3:87 ad Tha 967); “‘it is vexed’ means it is being troubled, oppressed” (*ruppato iti ghaṭṭiyamānassa pīliyamānassa*, JA 2:427, 3:169).

¹⁷⁸ **Mahā Taṇha,sankhaya S** (M 26) describes this as the fulfilling the 3 conditions of life formation, ie (1) there is coitus, (2) it is the woman’s fertile period, and (3) there is an “intermediate being” or “being-to-be-born” (*gan-dhabba*) that descends into the womb (M 38,26), SD 7.10.

¹⁷⁹ D 15,20 @ SD 5.17.

relationship, if consciousness (name) is not present, the form of the embryo will not develop and miscarriage will result.¹⁸⁰ But consciousness also cannot exist without the support that form provides. Or, if there is insufficient form, consciousness will not be able to arise properly. There must be physical sense-bases (*indriya*) that can come into contact with the external world for consciousness to arise. [4.5.6.]

Name and form are thus compared to two bundles of reeds leaning against one another, neither of which can stand without the other. In addition to this sense of the term as the physical and psychical components of the person, the term is also used in a wider sense to refer to the entire world as we know it, since it is composed of name (*nāma*) and form (*rūpa*).

4.5.5.7 The suttas tell us: “Feeling (*vedanā*), perception (*saññā*), volition (*cetanā*), impression (*phassa*), attention [mental advertence] (*manasikāra*): this, avuso, is called mind (*nāma*).”¹⁸¹ With two more mental factors, namely, mental vitality (*jīvita*) and concentration (*samādhi*) (here meaning the “stationary phase of mind,” *citta-t,thiti*),¹⁸² these 7 mental factors (*cetasika*) are the “universals common to all consciousnesses” (*sabba,citta,sādhāraṇa*), or simply called “universals.”¹⁸³ They perform the most rudimentary and essential cognitive functions, without which consciousness of an object would simply be impossible.

4.5.6 “Name-and-form have consciousness as their source” [§16 (6)]

4.5.6.1 The sutta stock definition of “consciousness” (*viññāna*) is given in **the (Paṭicca,samuppāda) Vibhaṅga Sutta** (S 12.2), as follows:

Bhikshus, there are these 6 classes of consciousness: eye-consciousness, ear-consciousness, nose-consciousness, tongue-consciousness, body-consciousness, and mind-consciousness. This is called consciousness. (S 12.2/2:4), SD 5.15

In simple terms, “consciousness” is the response or activity of each of the 6 sense-bases. It is, however, not “bare sensation” or “bare awareness,” because it is always attended by 7 mental factors, known as “universals,” that is, feeling, perception, volition, impression, attention, vitality and concentration [4.5.5.7].

In modern terms, this is what we may call “cognitive consciousness.” This is the consciousness that connects a sense-faculty with its respective object through sense-impression (*phassa*). When the attention (*manasikāra*) to the object occurs, the act of the moment is complete. Consciousness also has a penchant and potential for feeling (*vedanā*) or affective evaluations and reactions, for perception (*saññā*) or recognition of experiences, for volition (*saṅkhārā*), that is, willful actions or conative responses. All these processes can occur only when there is life (*jīvita*) and the capacity for mental concentration (*concentration*), that is, mental lucidity (which is effectively the opposite of non-consciousness, unawareness and madness).¹⁸⁴

4.5.6.2 Consciousness works on all the 6 senses, five of which are physical sense-bases and only 1 that is mental. The physical sense-bases (*indriya*) are the “source” of experience, hence, knowledge, of the external world, arising through the consciousness produced at each of these sense-bases [4.5.5.6]. In this case, consciousness acts as the **attention** working through the sense-faculty in “minding” (*manasikāra*) the sense-object.

This mere sensing, then, goes on to be tainted by our volition that is rooted in greed, hate or delusion (the unwholesome roots), or in non-greed, non-hate or non-delusion (the wholesome roots), when new karma is created and old karma strengthened as latent tendencies (*anusaya*) [3.5.1]. Here is another moral window, where we can decide whether to be motivated by an unwholesome root or a wholesome one.

¹⁸⁰ Such as in the case of an anencephalic embryo, a rare birth defect involving the absence of much of the brain, skull and scalp.

¹⁸¹ **Sammā Ditṭhi S** (M 9,54/1:53), SD 11.14; **(Paṭicca,samuppāda) Vibhaṅga S** (S 12.2,11/2:3 f) n, SD 5.15.

¹⁸² Vbh 258; AA 1:63+64; Vism 14.139, 176 f, 179, 18.8; Abhs 4.6, Abhs:BRS 154, 156 f.

¹⁸³ Abhs 2.2, Abhs:BRS 78-81.

¹⁸⁴ See also **(Upādāna) Parivaṭṭa S** (S 22.56) @ SD 3.7 (6.5).

This is where spiritual training, especially in the habitually keeping to the precepts and meditating, and some level of sutta learning and spiritual wisdom, are of great help. [Cf 4.5.3.3]

4.5.6.3 As already noted [4.5.5.4], “name” (*nāma*) can refer to the 5 aggregates of a new life at the moment of conception, when the consciousness from the previous lifetime enters the womb. In this context, “name” would be the consciousness that has “descended” into the womb from the previous lifetime, and “form” would be the embryo that it inhabits. [4.5.5.4]

This consciousness that maintains life is called the “**subconscious**”;¹⁸⁵ or “being-to-be-born” or *gandharva* (*gandhabba*), when it descends into a womb; “**rebirth consciousness**” (*paṭisandhi, citta*), when it first arises; or “**life-continuum**” (*bhav’āṅga*), when it runs through life. Technically, this is the “existential consciousness.”

“Existential consciousness” has to do with existence, that is, maintaining life and rebirth. “Cognitive consciousness,” on the other hand, is the active waking moment awareness. While the “life-continuum” arises only when we are asleep or unconscious (that is, whenever we are *not* awake or conscious), the “existential consciousness” is a general term for the collection of factors or properties that constitute life (other than the cognitive activities and processes, which are collectively called the “cognitive consciousness”).

4.5.7 “Consciousness has formations as its source” [§16 (7)]

4.5.7.1 *Saṅkhārā* (pl), “volitional formations,” is resolved as *saṃ* (= con, “together”) + *karoti*, “he does, he makes.” The noun has both the active and passive senses: as such, *saṅkhārā* are both things that put together, construct and compound other things, and the things that are put together, constructed and compounded by us (that is, our mind).

In the Nikāyas, *saṅkhāra* occurs in a number of major doctrinal contexts,¹⁸⁶ especially as a passive phenomenon, and an active one. As the 2nd link of dependent arising, *saṅkhārā* are the karmically active volitions (“volitional formations”) responsible, in conjunction with ignorance and craving, for producing and reproducing rebirth, and binding us to the wheel of existence (see, for example, **the Saṅkhār’upapatti Sutta**, M 120 @ SD 3.4).

4.5.7.2 In its more passive usage (especially as the adjective, *saṅkhata*, “conditioned”), *saṅkhārā* refer to anything that has been formed, conditioned, or brought into being. In this early denotation, the term is a designation for all things and persons that have been brought into being, *dependent on causes and conditions*. This kind of *saṅkhārā*, as a link in dependent arising, gives an *active* synthetical explanation of how an individual existence arises.

The *saṅkhārā* of the 5 aggregates (*khandha*), on the other hand, work in a *passive* analytical way, where the individual is examined as comprising functioning parts, as it were, and seeing them all working as a whole, without any essence or abiding entity. We are each a being in *process*, or *being* in process.

4.5.7.3 It is in this sense that the Buddha famously remarked that “all conditioned things (*saṅkhārā*) are impermanent” (*sabbe saṅkhārā aniccā*), and that they are also suffering” or “unsatisfactory” (*sabbe saṅkhārā dukkhā*)—these are the first two of the 3 universal characteristics (*sāmañña, lakkhaṇa*). The third characteristic is expressed as “all things are non-self” (*sabbe dhammā anattā*). This last statement is often misunderstood, but *dhamma* here means the principles underlying all things, animate and inanimate (but excluding nirvana).¹⁸⁷

The nature of passive “formation” (*saṅkhāro*, sg) is discussed in **the Kāma, bhū Sutta 2** (S 41.6). This passive kind of formation, as *saṅkhāra* (in the singular),¹⁸⁸ is used only in the context of the attain-

¹⁸⁵ On the subconscious, see SD 17.8b (6).

¹⁸⁶ See SD 17.6 Intro.

¹⁸⁷ See **Dhamma Niyāma S** (A 3.134), SD 26.8.

¹⁸⁸ On *saṅkhārā* and *saṅkhāra*, in connection with arhats and non-returners, see **Cūḷa Vedalla S** (M 44,15/1:301), SD 40a.9.

ment of the cessation of perception and feeling,¹⁸⁹ and never used in connection with dependent arising.¹⁹⁰ It describes the being of the Buddha or an arhat in deep meditation.

4.5.7.4 The statement “**all conditioned things are suffering**” (*sabbe saṅkhārā dukkhā*) needs further reflection. In fact, this statement is a direct reference to the third and last of the 3 kinds of suffering: (1) physical suffering (*dukkha, dukkhatā*), (2) suffering due to change (*vipariṇāma, dukkhatā*), and (3) suffering due to formations” (*saṅkhāra, dukkhatā*), as stated in **the (Sāriputta) Dukkha Sutta**.¹⁹¹

According to **the Dhamma, cakka Pavattana Sutta** (S 56.11), the third kind of suffering, that is due to formations, is none other than the 5 aggregates of clinging (*upadāna-k, khandha*), that is, form, feeling, perception, formations and consciousness, rooted in craving and ignorance, that feed the continued cycle of births and deaths of the unawakened.¹⁹²

Philosophically, suffering due to formations is identified as neutral feelings and their objects, which, due to impermanence, can turn into feelings of pain in the next instant. This form of suffering generally goes unnoticed by ordinary beings (*puṭhujjana*), for whom it is like a wisp of wool in the palm of the hand. However, it cannot be ignored by noble saints (*ariya, puggala*), who see it as a wisp of wool in the eye.

An example for the 3 types of suffering is a burn: as a conditioned state, it is suffering just because of its nature (*saṅkhāra, dukkhatā*). When a soothing or cooling ointment is applied, it feels better. But when the temporary relief ends, it will inevitably become painful again (*vipariṇāma, dukkhatā*). When it is produced even with a small splinter, it causes excruciating pain (*dukkha, dukkhatā*).¹⁹³

4.5.7.5 In its more active sense, *saṅkhārā* as latent “formations” left in the mind by actions (*kamma*) refers to that which form or condition other actions and states. In this usage, *saṅkhārā* means **karma** (*kamma*), and serve as the second link in the 12 links of dependent arising. Here, *saṅkhārā* refer specifically to volition (*cetanā*) and, as such, assume the karmically active role of perpetuating the rebirth-process.¹⁹⁴

Saṅkhārā as volition or karma are mentioned in **the (Paṭicca, samuppāda) Vibhaṅga Sutta** (S 12.2), as being of 3 kinds, that is, bodily formations, verbal formations and mental formations.¹⁹⁵ In other words, they are karmic activities of the body, speech and mind, or action through the 3 “doors” of karma. External sense-data flow, as it were, through the 3 doors flooding our mind and forming our consciousness. In simple terms, this is a learning process. (Consider the example of how an infant’s consciousness grows with the toys it plays with, the conditionings that its parents and other adults give it, and its own experience of the ambience.)

Buddhist training again applies here. While actions through the body and speech doors can be wholesomely restrained by way of keeping the precepts,¹⁹⁶ keeping the mind in check and reducing its unwholesomeness needs some level of mental cultivation.¹⁹⁷ When wisdom (*paññā*) is well cultivated, we are able to free the mind from forming karma, conditioned by such sense-experiences, if not at least reduce such formations.

¹⁸⁹ On the cessation of perception and feeling (*saññā, vedayita, nirodha*), see SD 48.7 (3.2); **Mahā Vedalla S** (M 43,25/1:296) + SD 30.2 (4); **Cūḷa Vedalla S** (M 44,16-21/1:301 f) + SD 40a.9 (2.5).

¹⁹⁰ S 41.6,3-17/4:293-295 (SD 48.7).

¹⁹¹ S 38.14/4:259 (SD 1.1(4.1)); also S 45.165/5:56; D 3:216.

¹⁹² See **Dhamma, cakka Pavattana S** (S 56.11,5(8)), SD 1.1.

¹⁹³ **Cūḷa Vedalla S** (M 44) further tells us that (1) a pleasant feeling is pleasant when it persists, but painful when it changes; (2) a painful feeling is painful when it persists, but pleasant when it changes; (3) a neutral feeling is pleasant when there is no knowledge of it, but painful when we know it (M 44,24/1:303) + SD 40a.9 (2.6).

¹⁹⁴ In the Yogācāra school (4th cent CE), *saṃskārā* refers to the karmic “seeds” (*bīja*) left in the “storehouse consciousness” (*ālaya, vijñāna*).

¹⁹⁵ S 12.2,14/2:4 (SD 5.15).

¹⁹⁶ On the recollection of moral virtue, see **Sīlānussati**, SD 15.11.

¹⁹⁷ On the 3 trainings, see **Sīla samādhi paññā**, SD 21.6.

4.5.8 “Formations have ignorance as their source” [§16 (8)]

4.5.8.1 When we ask ourself or someone else a key existential question such as, “Where do I come from?” we must at once counter-question,¹⁹⁸ “Is this a valid question?” What do we mean by the “I” here, and by “come from”? Let’s simply assume the “I” refers to our body and mind (after all, that’s all we are). If we say, *we come from (or is created by) God*, it is a useless answer, as we can further ask, “Where does God come from?” Or, the more perspicacious may retort, “We come from the almighty Flying Spaghetti Monster!”¹⁹⁹

We are probably told by theologians and preachers that “God has no beginning.” In that case, why not say the same of our body-mind—or perhaps not our *body* (it perishes), but certainly our mind—it has no beginning. It may not be a good answer, but it is certainly a better answer than “God”—that is, if we use common sense and simple logic, and are neither feared nor favoured into believing anything which we cannot verify, that is, what cannot be satisfactorily proven to be real and true.

4.5.8.2 Actually, there is a better and simpler answer to the question, “Where do I come from?” or “Where do all my ideas comes from?” Answer: “I don’t know.” In other words: they arise on account of **ignorance**. On deeper examination, this is a more satisfying answer than any other. After all, even if we accept the “I” to be simply the mind, we know that the mind is itself *changing* all the time. But the mind can only go back so far within its life-span, during which time it cannot possibly recall all our former births.²⁰⁰

On the other hand, if we ask: “Where does our **body** come from?”—the most sensible answer would be “From our parents.” In fact, this is the answer that the Buddha himself has given, for example, in **the Sāmaññaphala Sutta** (D 2):

With his mind thus concentrated, purified, and bright, unblemished, free from defects, pliant, malleable, steady and utterly unshakable,
he directs and inclines it to **knowledge and vision**, thus:
‘This body of mine is form
composed of the 4 great elements,²⁰¹ born from mother and father.
He understands thus:
nourished with rice and porridge,
subject to inconstancy, rubbing, pressing, dissolution, and dispersion.²⁰²
And this consciousness of mine lies attached here, bound up here.’²⁰³ (D 2,85) SD 8.10

Such a practical answer is, in fact, closer to natural truth and science, than any theological speculation can ever be.

4.5.8.3 Generally speaking, spiritual ignorance is often identified as any kind of self-based or self-centred views [1.3]. Technically, however, it is the ignorance of the 4 noble truths that blinds us to true reality and keeps us from awakening. The sutta stock definition of “ignorance” (*avijjā*) is given in **the (Paṭicca,samuppāda) Vibhaṅga Sutta** (S 12.2), as follows:

¹⁹⁸ Here, “counter-question” is used as a verb.

¹⁹⁹ See Reflection, “Flying Spaghetti Monster,” R330, 2014.

²⁰⁰ On this problem, see **Brahmajāla S** (D 1,31-35), SD 25.2; see also **Rohitassa S** (S 2.26 = A 4.45), SD 7.2.

²⁰¹ The 4 great (or primary): earth (*mahā,bhūtā*), water, fire, wind (D 1:214; Vism 11.27; Abhs 154): see **Rūpa @** SD 17.2a.

²⁰² See **Vammika S** (M 23,4/1:144), SD 28.13 for the parable of the anthill (representing the body).

²⁰³ **D 2,85/1:76 (×2) = M 109,9/2:17; M 23,4/1:144, 74,9/500; S 35.105/4:83 = A 9.15,2/4:386; S 55.21/5:369 f; Nigrodha,miga, J 12/1:146.** Cf Divy 180: *śatana,patana,vikirāna, vidhvamsanā,dharmatā*. See **Dīgha,nakha S** (M 74.9/1:500), SD 16.1 tr & nn. This statement means that consciousness (in a human or physical being) is dependent on the physical body. Rhys Davids points out that this and other passages disprove the idea that the (same) consciousness (*viññāna*) transmigrates. For holding such a view, Sāti was severely rebuked by the Buddha (M 38). A new re-linking consciousness (*paṭisandhi*) arises at conception, dependent on the old one (see Vism 17.164 ff).

Not knowing suffering, not knowing the arising of suffering, not knowing the ending of suffering, not knowing the path leading to the ending of suffering. This is called **ignorance**.²⁰⁴

(S 12.2,15/2:4), SD 5.15

4.5.8.4 This is not an academic ignorance. Scholars today know more about the noble truths than ever before, but none of them are awakened by this fact, fewer actually practise Buddhism, and a few are even hostile to Buddhists. It is not a philosophical ignorance. There are many Buddhist philosophers, philosophical Buddhists, and experts in Buddhist philosophy, but none of them seem to have awakened on this account.

We are unawakened because of our **existential or spiritual ignorance** of the noble truths. In other words, until we have really experienced them, we have not fully understood them.

When we have not really suffered, we will not understand craving (that's why we are still craving);

we will not know the ending of suffering (we are still suffering now);

we have yet to walk the path leading to the ending of suffering (we are clinging to our views);

and we have not attained nirvana is (but we *think* we understand it: this is only a view).

If it's any consolation, I would add that I, too, am in the same boat. At least we have a boat: we need to keep it light and dry, and to diligently row towards safe shores (Dh 369).²⁰⁵

4.5.8.5 Broadly speaking, our most powerful wrong views are, as a rule, somehow related to some kind of self-doctrine, such as the view that the body is pleasurable, that we have an eternal soul, or that some people are resigned to the notion that they “cannot change” or that there are others (in *their* view-point) who “cannot change.” These are all wrong views rooted in a self-identity-view. [1.3.4]

In this Sutta, too, the explanations show that the self-view is an aspect of clinging, which is itself caused and conditioned by craving. And then, craving itself is, in turn, conditioned by ignorance.²⁰⁶ Craving is blind, ignorance lame. So, craving sits on ignorance's shoulders and shows him the way. Ignorance blindly follows. Such an arrangement benefits neither, as they keep going around in circles.

4.5.9 “When ignorance is abandoned, true knowledge arises” [§17]

4.5.9.1 The word *vijjā* (Sanskrit *vidyā*) is found frequently in the suttas of early Buddhism—such as in the title Te,vijja Sutta (D 13)—where it encompasses what might be called secular knowledge of the world gained through investigation and analysis (such as in traditional medicine or even magic), as well as the salvific knowledge of the nature of reality gained through learning and meditation [4.5.9.2]. In Pāli commentarial literature, *vijjā* bears connotations of investigation, observation, and correct theories;²⁰⁷ thus, in some contexts, it is translated as “science” in the sense of experimental and exact knowledge.

In a very old sutta usage, *vijjā* is often applied to the “accomplishment of wisdom” (*vijjā,sampadā*), such as in the **Sāmañña,phala Sutta** (D 2), and almost all the other suttas of the Sīla-k,khandha Vagga.²⁰⁸ This is the training in wisdom, the third of the 3 trainings, where the other two, the trainings in moral virtue and in mental concentration together constitute the “accomplishment of conduct” (*carāṇa,sampadā*). In this sense, the Buddha is said to be “accomplished in knowledge and conduct” (*vijjā,carāṇa,sampadā*).²⁰⁹

4.5.9.2 The Pali for “true knowledge” here is *vijjā* (Skt *vidyā*), that is, the liberating knowledge, especially said to be the result of calm and insight (*samatha,vipassanā*) working together.²¹⁰ This liberating knowledge is often presented as a triad, “**the 3 knowledges**” (*ti,vijjā*), that is to say.²¹¹

²⁰⁴ For details on the 4 truths, see **Dhamma,cakka Pavattana S** (S 56.11), SD 1,1,

²⁰⁵ “Bail out this boat, bhikkhus! | Bailed dry it will go quickly. | Having cut off lust and hate, | you will then go to nirvana.” (Dh 369), SD 47.3a (1.3.1.3).

²⁰⁶ See (**Āhāra**) **Avijjā S** (A 10.61/5:116), SD 31.10.

²⁰⁷ Such as in the 3 Vedas (DA 1:267 f).

²⁰⁸ D 2,99-100 (SD 8.10).

²⁰⁹ D 3:97, 98, 237; S 1:153, 166, 2:284, 5:197; A 2:163, 4:238, 5:327; Sn 163, 289, 442.

²¹⁰ **Vijjā Bhāgiya S** (A 2.3.10), SD 3.2(4.2); also **Samatha and Vipassana**, SD 41.1 (3.2.3).

²¹¹ More fully: (1) the recollection of (one's own) past lives or retrocognition *pubbe,nivāsānussati,ñāṇa*); (2) the divine eye (*dibba,cakkhu*) or clairvoyance, ie, knowledge of the rebirth and redeath of beings according to their

- (1) the knowledge of rebirth (one’s own past lives),
- (2) the knowledge of karma (the past lives of others), and
- (3) the knowledge of the destruction of the mental influxes (*āsava*).²¹²

As arhats have these 3 knowledges, they are sometimes described as “those of the 3 knowledges” (*te, vijja*), which also forms the title of a key text, **the Te, vijja Sutta** (D 13), where the term is used pejoratively of the brahmins in the Buddha’s time who do not live moral lives but keep up wrong views and practices, believing in their Three Vedas.²¹³ The term, however, is also used in a positive sense when naturally adapted²¹⁴ to describe the three-knowledge arhat (*te, vijja arahata*), that is, one who understands the nature of karma, rebirth and the ending of both [above].²¹⁵

4.5.9.3 *Vijjā* was probably used in the older suttas to refer to liberating knowledge. Hence, its opposite is *avijjā*, “non-knowledge, ignorance (usually of the 4 noble truths)” In due course, when the teachings become more systematized, especially during the second period²¹⁶ of the Buddha’s ministry, when the noble truths were more often used as the essence of the teaching, the term *ñāṇa* (Skt *jñāna*) was more often used for liberating knowledge.

There is no radical shift in the meanings of doctrines in the suttas, but perhaps we may find cases of a shift in usage, a systematization of terminology, where flexible old terms and new sets of teachings grew to become more fixed and defined. In the Sutta Nipāta, for example, we find the two terms *vijjā* and *ñāṇa*, both meaning “knowledge.”²¹⁷ Outside of Buddhism, *vijjā* was probably more colloquial, while *ñāṇa* was more often applied to spiritual knowledge. The Buddha uses the two words synonymously in a spiritual sense.

4.5.9.4 **The Cūḷa Sīhanāda Sutta** closes with defining “true knowledge” as the “fading away of ignorance” [§17], and true knowledge (*vijjā*) is defined as the destruction of the 4 kinds of clinging—that is, to sensual pleasure, to views, to the attachment to rituals and vows, and to self-doctrine. “Without clinging,” declares the Buddha, “there is no agitation; without agitation (*paritassanā*), he surely wins nirvana.” [§17]

Paritassanā here has a range of meanings: “trembling, fear; nervousness, worry; excitement, longing.”²¹⁸ The Commentary to the Brahmajāla Sutta (D 1) has a long discourse on *paritassanā*, noting 4 kinds: on account of fear (*tāsa, tassanā*), of craving (*taṇhā, tassanā*), of views (*diṭṭhi, tassanā*), and of

karma; and (3) the knowledge of the destruction of the mental influxes (*āsava-k, khaya, ñāṇa*), that ends rebirth. See **Mahā Sīha,nāda S** (M 12,17-19), SD 49.1 = SD 2.24 (excerpts); **Cūḷa Hatthi, padōpama S** (M 27,23-25) @ SD 40.5. See also D 3:281; M 1:34; A 1:255, 258, 3:17, 280, 4:421.

²¹² **The mental influxes** (*āsava*): as set of 3: (1) sense-desire (*kām’āsava*), (2) (desire for eternal) existence (*bhav’āsava*), (3) ignorance (*avijj’āsava*) (D 33,1.10(20)/3:216,9; M 9,70/1:55,10, 121,11/3:108,18 @ SD 14.11; S 38.8/4:256,4 = 45.163/5:56,15 = 47.50/189,29; A 3.58/1:165,16, 3.59,4/1:167,22, 6.63/3:414,11; Vbh 914/384,13). The Abhidhamma and Comys give a list of **4 influxes**, also found in the Nikāyas, ie, with (3) views (*diṭṭh’āsava*), etc (D 16,1.12/2:82 + 2.4/2:91, Pm 1.442, 561; Dhs §§1096-1100, Vbh §937): also known as the 4 “floods” (*ogha*) and “yokes” (*yoga*) (V 3:5,27 f; D 16,1.12/2:81,26 = 84,5 & passim, 33,1.11(31)/3:230,10 f; Vbh 373,34 f; Dhs 1:448; Kvu 515,2;).

²¹³ **Te, vijja S** (D 13) @ SD 1.8 (2.2.2); Sn 594, SnA 463 *ti, veda*.

²¹⁴ On natural adaptation, see SD 39.3 (3.3.4).

²¹⁵ V 2:183; S 6.5/1:146; A 3.58/1:163 (both senses compared); Sn 656; Pm 1.34; Pv 4.1.34; Miln 359.

²¹⁶ On the 2 periods of the ministry, see SD 40a.1 (1.3).

²¹⁷ *Ñāṇa*, 55c, 347b, 372c, 387a, 503,14, 788d, 789b, 799b, 800b || 839c, 839a=1078a, 840a, 987a, 989b, 1113e, 1115e. *Vijjā*, 162a, 163a, 334b, 656a || 730a, 594b, 1026b. Doctrinally, *ñāṇa* is more common in the oldest parts of Sn, ie, Aṭṭhaka Vagga and Pārāyana Vagga..

²¹⁸ See **Upādā Paritassanā Ss 1+2** (S 22.7+8/3:15-19), SD 97.10+11; **Cūḷa Taṇhā, saṅkhaya S** (M 37,3/1:251 f), SD 54.8. “Not clinging to the world, he is not agitated”: **Parivimamsana S** (S 12.5.1.14) n, SD 11.5. “Not agitated regarding what is non-existent”: **Alagaddūpama S** (M 22,18.2) n, SD 3.13. **Brahma, jāla S** (D 1) describe the newly arisen Mahā Brahmā’s loneliness as one of “unrest, discontent, agitation” (*nibbusitattā anabhīrati paritassanā*, D 1,41/1:17; DA 1:111), SD 25.2. See also **Uddesa Vibhaṅga S** (M 138,20); **(Khandha) Samādhi S** (S 22.5) mentions *tāsa* (anxiety); **Upāya S** (S 22.53); **Udāna S** (S 22.55); **Taṇhā Jālinī S** (A 4.199), SD 26.12 (3). See also M 3:227; S 3:15 f, 135; Miln 253, 400; opp *aparitassanā*, M 1:136; S 3:15. On *paritassanā*, see SD 3.9 (5.1) n35.

knowledge (*ñāṇa, tassanā*) (DA 1:111).²¹⁹ **The Alagaddûpama Sutta** (M 22) explains that when we “disown” –regard as “This is not mine, this I am not, this is not my self”—the 5 aggregates (our mind and body), then we will “not (be) anxious [agitated] regarding what is non-existent.”²²⁰

4.5.9.5 The subtlest form of this “agitation” (*paritassanā*) is called (mental) restlessness (*uddhacca*), or more specifically, “**Dharma restlessness**” (*dhamm’uddhacca*), which is found even in a saint. **The (Yuganaddha) Paṭipadā Sutta** (A 4.170), prescribes restlessness as one of the ways to attain final liberation.²²¹ It says that we can reach the path to final liberation when the mind is under the influence of *dhamm’uddhacca*, “restlessness related to the Dharma” (or “restlessness of mental states”). Once the mind settles down and becomes focused, the path is attained.²²²

The most famous example of *uddhacca* as a spiritual experience is arguably that of **Bāhiya Dāru-cīriya**. Bāhiya, the bark-clothed ascetic, is very excited on meeting the Buddha, and urgently requests the Buddha to teach him, fearing that he might die without hearing the Dharma, or that the Buddha might die and not teach him.²²³ Although not specifically mentioned, we can take this as a sense of unease or restlessness towards the Dharma (*dhamm’uddhacca*). This is also a form of samvega or sense of religious urgency.²²⁴

4.5.9.6 Practitioners who meditate, harmonizing dhyana with insight, will gain either arhathood or non-return.²²⁵ **The Paṭisallāna Sutta** (It 45) says that if the meditator still has a “trace of clinging” (*upādi, sesa*), he will become a non-returner (instead of an arhat). This “trace” refers to a subtle attachment that prevents the arising of arhathood. However, it is only a matter of time before such a person attains arhathood if he is diligent in his efforts.²²⁶

The Aṭṭhaka, nāgara Sutta (M 52) states that the attainment of non-return arises on account of the practitioner’s “desire in dharma” (*dhamma, raga*), that is, some level of subtle attachment to his meditative state, a regard for the teaching, or some wholesome longing.²²⁷ Such a subtle restlessness (*uddhacca*) may arise out of concern for the Dharma and how others can benefit from it. He might still have a thought for rebirth in the form or the formless realms.

Moreover, on account of his high attainment, he might feel that other beings are somehow less fortunate, that is, a subtle sense of conceit or measuring against others. All these in fact, constitute the 5 higher fetters,²²⁸ fully overcome only by the arhat.²²⁹ Ironically, this is seen as a virtue in Mahāyāna Buddhism, where a Bodhisattva is said to be able to “postpone” or forego awakening (an idea foreign to early Buddh-

²¹⁹ For details, see SD 25.3 (41).

²²⁰ M 22,16-17 (SD 3.13).

²²¹ A 4.170.5/2:157 (SD 41.5).

²²² See *Uddhacca, kukkucca*, SD 32.7 (2.1.4).

²²³ See **(Arahatta) Bāhiya S** (U 1.10/6-9) & SD 33.7 (2).

²²⁴ See *Uddhacca, kukkucca*, SD 32.7 (2.2.3); see also **Mahā, parinibbāna S** (D 16), SD 9 (7f).

²²⁵ **Mahā Satipaṭṭhāna S** (D 22,22/2:314,12); **Sati’paṭṭhāna S** (M 10,46/1:62); **Kīṭa, giri S** (M 70,27/1:481); **Añ-ñātara S** (S 46.57/5:129); **Nirodha S** (S 46.76/5:133); **Dve Phalā S** (S 48.65/5:236); **Phalā S 1+2** (S 54.4+5/5:313 f); **Iddhi, pāda S** (A 5.67/3:82); **Sati Supaṭṭhita S** (A 5.122/3:143); **Pabbajjā S** (A 10.59/5:108); **Paṭisallāna S** (It 2.2.8/39,15); **Sikkhānisamsa S** (It 2.2.9/40,12); **Jāgariyo S** (It 2.2.10/41,11); **Dvayatānupassanā S** (Sn pp140,13, 148,13).

²²⁶ It 45,4 (SD 41.4).

²²⁷ M 52,4.5/1:350 + SD 41.2 (2.2). Piṅgiya, on listening to the Buddha, would have become an arhat, but then he is distracted by the thought, if only his teacher Bāvāri were present to benefit from the teaching, too. As a result, Piṅgiya attains only non-return (SnA 603 f): see also SD 45.11 (2.2.2.3).

²²⁸ **The 10 fetters** (*dasa saṃyojana*): (1) self-identity view (*sakkāya, diṭṭhi*), (2) spiritual doubt (*vicikicchā*), (3) attachment to rituals and vows (*sīla-b, bata, parāmāsa*), (4) sensual lust (*kāma, rāga*), (5) aversion (*paṭigha*), (6) greed for form existence (*rūpa, rāga*), (7) greed for formless existence (*arūpa, rāga*), (8) conceit (*māna*), (9) restlessness (or remorse) (*uddhacca*), (10) ignorance (*avijjā*): see **Kīṭa, giri S** (M 70), SD 11.1 (5.1); **(Sekha) Uddesa S** (A 4.85), SD 3.3(2); also S 5:61; A 5:13; Vbh 377.

²²⁹ See SD 45.18 (2.5.5).

ism).²³⁰ In doing so, such practitioners not only revised the Buddha’s teaching on awakening, but also created a huge “theological” problem of what it means to “save all beings.”

4.5.10 Conclusion: To save the world, save oneself

4.5.10.1 In the **Lok’anta Gamana Sutta 1**, the Buddha, in simple words with a profound sense, explains what it really means to “save the world.” We need to first understand what “world” really means.²³¹ In the **Sabba Sutta** (S 35.23), the Buddha declares that all that there exist are our 6 sense-faculties and their 6 respective sense-objects: these are the “all” (*sabba*), everything there is. This is the world, the universe we have created for ourselves. Nothing is meaningful beyond this.²³²

4.5.10.2 The Buddha has never exhorted us to “save the world,” as this concept of “save the world” ultimately refers to all our senses, from which we liberate ourselves. Even when taunted by the wanderer Uttiya, who asks, with all the Buddha’s attainments and teachings, “Is the whole world liberated by this, or only half of it, or a third of it?” The Buddha remains silent, because the question is wrongly put.²³³

4.5.10.3 In an important sense, we can say that the Buddha’s teaching is about “saving oneself” *from* the world. The world is what we make of it: we create our own world. Hence, it is within our power to change our “world,” that is, *ourselves*. This is the spirit of “**renouncing the world**,” of letting go of the world so that we are free of the falseness and unwholesomeness we have created for ourselves. To save the world, then, we need to renounce it, to let go of any notion of an abiding essence or eternal self.

4.5.10.4 In the **Lok’anta Gamana Sutta 1** (S 35.116), the Buddha declares what kind of “world” that we can really save or liberate. First, the Buddha shows us what kind of world needs “saving”:

Bhikshus, the end of the world cannot be known, seen or reached by going, I say. Yet, bhikshus, I also say that without reaching the end of the world there is no making an end to suffering.²³⁴

(S 35.116,2), SD 7.4

The first mention of “**the world**” refers to the physical universe, which has neither beginning nor ending in terms of time and space (*okāsa, loka*). It also refers to the world of beings (*satta, loka*), simply put, the cycle of births and deaths (*samsāra*) itself, which is external to us. However, *within* us is the world of formations (*saṅkhārā, loka*), the self-made and self-centred “world”—this is our real prison of craving and ignorance, what we need to awaken from, so that we are fully liberated.²³⁵

4.5.10.5 **The Lok’anta Gamana Sutta 1** [4.5.10.4] further records the Buddha as declaring, “That in the world by which one is a perceiver of the world, a conceiver of the world—this is called ‘the world’²³⁶ in the noble one’s discipline.”²³⁷ (S 35.116,22). This refers to the workings of the 6 sense-bases. Then, the Buddha famously declares in the **Rohitassa Sutta** (S 2.26):

In this very fathom-long body, endowed with perception and mind, I declare
the world,
the arising of the world,
the ending of the world, and

²³⁰ SD 41.4 (2.2.1). For further details, see SD 41.8 (5).

²³¹ S 35.116 (SD 7.4)

²³² S 35.23 (SD 7.1).

²³³ A 10.95/5:195 (SD 44.16).

²³⁴ *Nāham bhikkhave gamanena lokassa antam nātayam daṭṭhayaṃ pattayam ti vadāmi. Na ca paṇāham bhikkhave apatvā lokassa antam dukkhassa anta, kiriyam vadāmi ti.* On the meanings of “world,” see **Rohitassa S**, SD 7.2 (1).

²³⁵ On these “3 worlds” (*loka*), see SD 7.2 (1).

²³⁶ See for example **Sabba S** (S 35.23/4:15), SD 7.1, where “the world” refers to the 12 sense-bases.

²³⁷ *Yena kho āvuso lokasmim loka, saññī hoti lokamānī ayam vuccati ariyassa vinaye loko.* See **Rohitassa S** (S 2.-26) + SD 7.2 (2). On the physical sense-bases making one a “perceiver” and the mind-base making one a “conceiver,” see Bodhi’s remark in Intro above. See (**Nāvā**) **Bhāvanā S** (A 7.67,5-21/4:125-127), SD 15.2.

the way leading to the ending of the world.”²³⁸ (S 2.26,9), SD 7.2

4.5.10.6 In short, the Buddha does not exhort us to “save all beings”—this is simply a logical impossibility (we cannot save beings of the past or the future!) and a theological doublespeak (“ultimately,” we might then say, “There are no beings to be saved ... !”)

Even when we cultivate lovingkindness, “May all beings be well and happy,” we are simply using conventional language to help us clear our mind and heart of all ill will and radiate lovingkindness. It means an unconditional acceptance of others, and to begin there with our wise compassion.

We need to awaken ourself first before we can awaken others. Once we are awakened, then we will see how frivolous and false we have been even in our most religious moments, and how spiritually efficacious we are even in our silent moments.

5 The Cūḷa Sīhanāda Sutta and related texts

5.1 THE SUTTA AND ITS PARALLELS

5.1.1 The Cūḷa Sīhanāda Sutta, “the lesser discourse on the lion-roar” has two parallels in Chinese translations, found in the Madhyama Āgama and in the Ekōttarika Āgama.²³⁹ The Majjhima and the Madhyama Āgama versions begin with the Buddha encouraging the monks to roar the “lion-roar” [0.1.1.2] that the 4 types of true recluses [1] are found only among them, whereas other teachings are empty of true recluses.²⁴⁰

After listing the 4 qualities—(1) confidence in the teacher, (2) confidence in the Dharma, (3) accomplished in moral virtue, and (4) being dear and agreeable to both householders and renunciants [§4.1]—both the Cūḷa Sīhanāda Sutta and its Madhyama Āgama counterpart describe the Buddha as instructing the monks that should other recluses claim that they have the same 4 qualities, they should ask them a set of counter-questions, beginning with “Now, avusos, is the goal one, or is the goal many?” [§5]²⁴¹

5.1.2 The Ekōttarika Āgama version has a rather different beginning: the monks have actually gone to visit other recluses and have been challenged by them. These other recluses have asked the monks to point out in what respect the Buddha’s teaching differs from their own.²⁴² Apparently unable to reply, the monks withdraw and report this challenge to the Buddha, who instructs them how to respond to such challenges in the future, with a set of counter-questions, beginning with the question, “*If there is one final goal or if there are several final goals ... ?*”

5.1.3 If, after making the lion-roar, we are asked for the reason we are doing so, both the Pali and the Madhyama Āgama version say that we should declare the 4 qualities of a dharmafarer [2]. The final goal [3] is stated in fairly similar terms in the Cūḷa Sīhanāda Sutta and its Chinese versions. All the three versions then examine the 2 extreme views and the 4 types of clinging [4].

5.1.4 The Sutta continues by showing, by way of the 7 links of dependent arising, how the 4 types of clinging are traced to ignorance [§16]. The two Chinese versions do not mention the intervening links of dependent arising. The Madhyama Āgama version simply states that the arising of the 4 types of clinging

²³⁸ *Api khvāhaṃ āvuso imasmīñ,ñeva vyāma,matte kaḷevare saññimhi samanake lokaṃ ca paññāpemi loka,samudayaṃ ca loka,nirodhaṃ ca loka,nirodha,gāminim ca paṭipadan ti.*

²³⁹ The parallels are MĀ 103 @ T1.590b-591b and EĀ 27.2 @ T2.643c-644b. MĀ 103 agrees with M 11 on the title “the discourse on the lion-roar,” 師子吼經 *shī zi hōu jīng*, although it does not specify this discourse to be a “lesser” one. The *Mahāvibhāṣā, T1545 (T27.38a20), refers to the present discourse under the same title 師子吼經 *shī zi hōu jīng*. While EĀ 27.2 and M 11 take place at Jeta’s grove outside Sāvattihī, MĀ 103 locates it at Kammāsa, -dhamma in the Kuru country. EĀ 27.2 has been tr in Analayo 2011:99-105 & 2009a.

²⁴⁰ M 11/1:64,1: *sīha,nādaṃ nadatha* and MĀ 103 (T1.590b10): 師子吼 *shī zi hōu*; for a quotation of this proclamation in the *Mahāvibhāṣā, cf T1545 (T27.341c5).

²⁴¹ M 11/1:64,26: *ekā niṭṭhā udāhu puthū niṭṭhā’ti* (M:Be 1:93,9 and M:Ce 1:156,21: *puthu*); MĀ 103 (T1.590c3): 為一究竟, 為眾多究竟耶? *wéi yī jiūjìng,wéi zhòngduō jiūjìng yé*; and EĀ 27.2 (T2.643c21): 為一究竟, 為眾多究竟乎? *wéi yī jiūjìng,wéi zhòngduō jiūjìng hū*.

²⁴² MA 2:4,16 similarly reports the Buddha being informed by the monks that other recluses claim to be of equal worth as the Buddha and his monks, which then prompted him to deliver the present teaching.

is directly due to ignorance,²⁴³ while the Ekōttarika Āgama version only indicates that they arise on account of craving.²⁴⁴ All versions, however, state that the 4 types of clinging are overcome with full awakening.

5.1.5 The Sutta ends at this point, while the two Chinese versions conclude with the lion-roar about the 4 types of recluses found in the teaching.²⁴⁵ The lion-roar occurs for the first time in the Ekōttarika Āgama version here and is also worded differently from the other two versions. In the Ekōttarika version, the Buddha simply points out that the 4 types of recluses cannot be found anywhere else,²⁴⁶ without proclaiming that the teachings of others are devoid of such recluses, as he does in the Pali and the Madhyama versions.²⁴⁷

The Ekōttarika Āgama version of the lion-roar thus seems to be less aggressive than in the other two versions, in spite of being based on an actual encounter with outsiders and being challenged by them. In the other two versions, however, the adversaries are only imagined.²⁴⁸ [5.2]

5.1.6 The Sutta Commentary (MA 2:5,18), in connection with the statement that the 4 recluses are found only here in the teaching and that outside systems are “empty of recluses,” says that this statement is also found in full in **the (Catukka) Samaṇa Sutta** (A 4.239),²⁴⁹ and in the Buddha’s admonition to Subhadda in **the Mahā Parinibbāna Sutta** (D 16).²⁵⁰ These reprises of the lion-roar attest to its importance.

5.2 IS THE CŪḶA SĪHA,NĀDA SUTTA POLEMICAL?

5.2.1 We have noted that the Ekōttarika Āgama version of the lion-roar seems to be less “aggressive” than that in the other two versions, despite the former being based on an actual encounter with outsiders and the monks being challenged by them [5.1.5]. Furthermore, the Ekōttarika Āgama’s lion-roar comes as a natural climax at the end of the teaching, whereas the other two versions have their lion-roar right at the start, which can be seen as being somewhat confrontational. The Ekōttarika Āgama version also does not make any disparaging statement about other teachings, so that lion-roar seems less confrontational or polemical.

Analayo, in the role of a good scholar, in his comparative study of the Sutta concludes: “Such a magnanimous attitude in regard to other contemporary recluses would fit the way the discourses present a fully awakened Buddha better than the competitive tone of the lion’s roar of the Cūḷasīhanāda-sutta and its Madhyama-āgama parallel attribute to him.” (2011:105). However, a careful study of the texts concerned will show that such a conclusion is clearly unwarranted. The tone of the Cūḷa Sīha,nāda Sutta is *not* at all competitive, but inspiring with a vital purpose.

What is that vital purpose?

²⁴³ MĀ 103 (T1.591b10): 此四受因無明 *cǐ sì shòu yīn wú míng*.

²⁴⁴ EĀ 27.2 (T2.644b7): 由何而生? 然此四受由愛而生 *yóu hé ér shēng? rán cǐ sì shòu yóu ài ér shēng*.

²⁴⁵ MĀ 103 (T1.591b20) and EĀ 27.2 (T2.644b.15).

²⁴⁶ EĀ 27.2 (T2.644b16): 更無復有沙門出此上者, 能勝此者 *gèng wú fù yǒu shā mén chū cǐ shàng zhě, néng shèng cǐ zhě*. An extract from the present discussion already appeared in Analayo 2005:6-7.

²⁴⁷ M 11/1:63,29: *suññā para-p,pavādā samaṇehi aññe’ti* (M:Be 1:92,9: *samaṇebhi aññehi* and M:Se 1:128,8: *samaṇehi aññebhi*), which M:ÑB 2005:159 tr as: “the doctrines of others are devoid of recluses.” MĀ 103 @ T1.-590b13: “heterodox practitioners are all devoid of and without recluses and brahmins,” 異道一切空無沙門, 梵志. *yì dào yīqiè kōng, wú shā mén fānzhì*. The remark made in M 11 recurs in D 16/2:151,21 and in A 4.239/2:238,8. While A 4.239 appears to be without a Chinese parallel, one of the parallels to D 16, **T6 (T1.187c8)**, does not proclaim that other teachings are devoid of true recluses—thus it is closer in spirit to the lion-roar in EĀ 27.2.

²⁴⁸ That is, EĀ 27.2 records a real debate, where, as Manné points out, “something is always at stake. Not only must the best question be asked, and the best answer be given, but converts must be won and lay support must be gained” (1990:73). In contrast, M 139 and MĀ 169 are only concerned with a hypothetical situation and thus much less in need of the aggressive attitude.

²⁴⁹ A 4.239/2:238 (SD 49.14).

²⁵⁰ D 16,5.27/2:151 f), SD 9.

5.2.2 It should be noted that the Ekōttarika version of the Cūḷa Sīhanāda Sutta probably records a different event than that of the Sutta and its Madhyama version. In the Ekōttarika version, there *is* actual confrontation between the monks and outsiders. Understandably, then, the Buddha would instruct the monks concerned to be more civil and unconfrontational.

In the case of the Cūḷa Sīhanāda Sutta and its Madhyama version, the Buddha instructs the monks in a hypothetical way, as it were, that is, as an internal teaching for the monk (and us today). Understandably, in such a context, the Buddha would be forthright in his criticism of others where it is warranted. This is not confrontation at all, as there is an opposing party at that time.

In fact, such a teaching is very common in the suttas where wrong views need to be corrected, and—as in our case here—we should be courageous and confident in making our lion-roar and be a faithful witness to the Dharma to inspire others to practise it. This approach is to inspire us to be courageously confident (*visarada*) in standing up for the Dharma whenever needed, and to declare our faith in it publicly to inspire others to take the right path. Such a proactive attitude is especially vital when we have wrong views and practices in the name of Buddhism, as in our own time.

5.2.3 According to Analayo, the presentation in the Ekōttarika version would concord with the way other discourses depict the Buddha, indicating that his attitude towards other contemporary teachers was not competitive or disputatious.²⁵¹ This would, of course, be the case when the Buddha or his followers are speaking with outsiders—which is the case in the Ekōttarika version.

Such an approach will certainly be in harmony with the teachings of **the Araṇa Vibhaṅga Sutta** (M 139) and its Chinese parallel, according to which we should teach the Dharma without disparaging others.²⁵² The Araṇa Vibhaṅga Sutta, however, does *not* say that we should not criticize where criticism is due. It teaches us not to disparage or belittle others when teaching the Dharma to others: it gives general principles of effective Dharma teaching and dialogue, and to speak out critically when it is due—in the spirit of “non-conflict” (*araṇa*).

On the other hand, the Cūḷa Sīhanāda Sutta’s proclamation of the 4 types of true recluses [§2.1], and “Empty of recluses are the other outside doctrines” [§2.2] are vital facts which make the Buddha Dharma unique and valuable.²⁵³ Indeed, they are the *raison d’être* for the Buddha Dharma. It openly shows that the Buddha Dharma is an efficacious way to awakening, and the only one, too. Such a statement is in the spirit of the Buddha’s great commission for us to “go forth” (*caratha*) and present the Dharma to the world.²⁵⁴

5.2.4 According to **the Puppha Sutta** (S 22.94) and its parallel in the Saṃyukta Āgama, the Buddha describes his own attitude with the words: “I do not dispute with the world, it is the world that disputes with me.” The Buddha then declares that a Dharma-speaker (*dhamma, vādī*), too, does not dispute with anyone in the world. “Of that which the wise (*pañḍita*) in the world agree upon as not existing, I too say that it does not exist. And that which the wise in the world agree upon as existing, I too say that it exists.”²⁵⁵

It is interesting that the Buddha, in **the Kaccānagotta Sutta** (S 12.15), declares that the world generally sees things in terms of the duality of existence and non-existence, and exhorts us to take the middle way of dependent arising and dependent ending.²⁵⁶ This is a teaching for the “initiated”—the monastics

²⁵¹ Analayo 2011:104. Wijebandara notes that a “characteristic of the Buddha’s attitude is its unpolemic nature” (1993:98).

²⁵² M 139/3:231,27 (SD 7.8) and MĀ 169 @ T1.701c17.

²⁵³ Scholars like Freiburger think that to declare that the teachings of others are devoid of true recluses implies “that the ideal of ‘what an ascetic ought to be’ is realized only in the Buddhist sangha” seems to spring from a somewhat polemic attitude (2000:5). On the contrary, if *true* recluses (the 4 kinds of saints) can be found outside of the Buddha Dharma, then we would not need the Buddha to declare the Dharma, and so on.

²⁵⁴ See **The great commission**, SD 11.2.

²⁵⁵ S 22.94/3:138,26 (SD 72.5): *nāhaṃ ... lokena vivādāmi, loka ca maya vivādati* (S:Be 2:113,6: *va* instead of *ca*’ S:Ce 3:238,11 and S:Se 3:169,8: *ca kho bhikkhave*), and its parallel SĀ 37 @ T2.8b16: 我不與世間諍。世間與我諍。 *Wǒ bù yú shìjiān shèng, shìjiān yú wǒ zhèng.*

²⁵⁶ S 12.15/2:16-17 (SD 6.13).

and the practising laity. But in **the Puppha Sutta**, we see the Buddha, when dealing with the world, does not reject all ontological propositions, but only those that are not verifiable by personal experience.

When teaching the world, to those who have different priorities and perhaps, lacking spiritual wisdom, he teaches what they can appreciate to start with, so that they are inspired to “come and see” (*ehi, -passika*) and taste the Dharma for themselves. Here again, we see the Buddha teaching what is understandable and acceptable to his audience. In the case of those who are more committed to Dharma training, he teaches them to have a direct vision of true reality.

5.2.5 The Upāli (Gaha,pati) Sutta (M 56) and its Chinese parallel, as well as **the (Licchavī) Siha Sutta** (A 8.12), agree in describing this non-contentious attitude of the Buddha on the occasion when well-known and influential supporters of the Jains become the Buddha’s followers. According to these Suttas, Sīha and Upāli express their pleasant surprise when the Buddha, instead of using their conversion for propaganda purposes, advises them to carefully consider what they are about to do and even requests them to continue supporting the Jain monks with alms, as they have done earlier.²⁵⁷

Clearly here, the Buddha does not need to criticize the Jains (or any other outside teacher) as he has already done so earlier, and taught the Dharma, convincing Upāli and other converts so that they attain streamwinning. As a streamwinner, Upāli’s faith in the 3 jewels would be unshakable, but the Buddha, out of compassion, tells him to continue giving alms to his erstwhile teacher, out of “professional courtesy,” that is, to say, it is a hallmark of a good Buddhist to be generous and grateful to others.

5.2.6 In the Te,vijja Sutta (D 13), on the other hand, like many similar suttas,²⁵⁸ we see the Buddha forthrightly critical of the brahmins before two young brahmins (who are not even Buddhists yet)! The Te,vijja Sutta is, in fact, a sutta that is strongly critical of the brahmins and their religion. It might even be said to be a polemical text, but not a confrontational one. The reason for this is simple enough: the Buddha is addressing two very intelligent young brahmins, Vāseṭṭha and Bhāra,dvāja, who have come to question him on the very same subject. It is very much like Socrates addressing the wise youths of Athens in an exhilarating atmosphere of learning and truth.²⁵⁹

The Buddha is a teacher who knows his audience very well indeed. To the wisest and readiest, he teaches the Dharma, presenting reality just as it is, warts and all.²⁶⁰ To others in need of more detailed teachings and guidance, he compassionately guides them.²⁶¹ And to others whom he meets or who come to him, he teaches them, too, in such a way that they will somehow return to the Dharma, as it were.²⁶²

5.2.7 The Cūla Sīha,nāda Sutta is taught to spiritually ready monastics and to us who love the Dharma. The Buddha reminds us forthrightly that the 4 kinds of saints are here amongst us (at least in his own time), and in our own time, we are capable of attaining streamwinning by aspiring to it, and habitually reflecting on impermanence.²⁶³

In this Sutta, the Buddha reminds us that the Buddha Dharma is still with us; the eightfold path is still open to us; it is possible for us to be streamwinners, once-returners, non-returners and arhats. The outside systems—including those that reject the 4 kinds of recluses or the arhats or teach that they still have to become Buddhas—are “empty of recluses”: these systems are surely not the path to awakening. We need to be *told* this, and we need to tell *others* this, with courage and compassion so that none of us would be shortchanged with private truths and false teachings.

²⁵⁷ A 8.12/4:185,9 (= V 1:236,19) (SD 71.5) and M 56/1:379,3 (SD 27.1). According to the Chinese parallel to M 56, MĀ 133 @ T1.630a25, the Buddha even advised Upāli that he should not proclaim his conversion at all, in addition to recommending him to continue supporting the Jain monks.

²⁵⁸ For some suttas where the Buddha is clearly critical of outside teachers and wrong teachings and practices, see eg **Brahma,jāla S** (D 1), SD 25; **Ambaṭṭha S** (D 3), SD 21.3; **Aggañña S** (D 27), SD 2.19; **Vasala S** (Sn 1.7), SD 72.2;

²⁵⁹ D 13/1:235-252 (SD 1.8).

²⁶⁰ Eg **Brahma,jāla S** (D 1), SD 25; **Te,vijjā S** (D13), SD 1.6.

²⁶¹ Eg (**Arahatta**) **Māluṅkyā,putta S** (S 35.95), SD 5.9.

²⁶² Eg the teaching given to **Upāka**, SD 12.1 (4+5).

²⁶³ See any of the 10 suttas of **Okkanta Vagga** (S 25).

The Cūḷa Sīha.nāda Sutta is not an isolated text, but its lion-roar recurs in at least two other places: **the Mahā Parinibbāna Sutta** (D 16) and **the (Catukka) Samaṇa Sutta** (A 4.239) [5.1.6]. Its fullest exposition is found in the Cūḷa Sīha,nāda Sutta, which thus stands unique as the key text in **Buddhist missiology**. Through it, the Buddha exhorts us to declare the Dharma just as it is, so that the seekers will know they still have the opportunity for the true path and right awakening. For others, they can still make the wise choice of turning away from wrong teachings and the unwholesome ways of the world. Our purpose, then, is to understand the spirit of the Cūḷa Sīha,nāda Sutta, and our task is to roar the lion-roar.

— — —

The Lesser Discourse on the Lion-roar

M 11

1 Thus have I heard.

The 4 kinds of recluses

At one time, the Blessed One was staying in Anātha,piṇḍika’s park monastery in Jeta’s grove outside Sāvattḥī.

1.1 There, the Blessed One addressed the monks,

“Bhikshus!”

“Bhante!” the monks replied in assent.

2 The Blessed One said this:²⁶⁴

“Only here, ²⁶⁵ bhikshus, there is	the recluse; ²⁶⁶	<i>Idh’eva bhikkhave samaṇo</i>
here, there is	the second recluse; ²⁶⁷	<i>idha dutiyo samaṇo</i>
here, there is	the third recluse; ²⁶⁸	<i>idha tatiyo samaṇo</i>
here, there is	the fourth recluse. ²⁶⁹	<i>idha catuttho samaṇo</i>

2.2 Empty of recluses are the other outside doctrines²⁷⁰ [64]—thus, bhikshus, you rightly²⁷¹ roar the lion-roar!²⁷²

²⁶⁴ On these 4 kinds of saints—the streamwinner, the once-returner, the non-returner, and the arhat—see (1.2). See also **Alagaddūpama S** (M 22,42-47), SD 3.13 ≈ **Ānāpāna,sati S** (M 118,9-12), SD 7.13.

²⁶⁵ “Only here” (*idh’eva*), only in the Buddha’s teaching (MA 2:4): see (1.1.1). The 4 recluses (*samaṇa*) here are the 4 kinds of noble disciples (*ariya,sāvaka*), viz, the streamwinner, the once-returner, the non-returner and the arhat: Comy (MA 2:5,18) cites **(Catukka) Samaṇa S** (A 4.239), SD 49.14, and to the Buddha’s admonition to Subhadda in **Mahā,parinibbāna S** (D 16,5.27/2:151 f), SD 9. On the 4 saints, see also **Samaṇa-m-acala Ss 1+2** (A 4.87), SD 20.13 + (A 4.88), SD 20.14.

²⁶⁶ This is the streamwinner (*sot’āpanna*), def in **(Catukka) Samaṇa S** (A 4.239/2:238) SD 49.14.

²⁶⁷ This is the once-returner (*sakadāgāmī*), def in **(Catukka) Samaṇa S** (A 4.239/2:238) SD 49.14.

²⁶⁸ This is the non-returner (*anāgāmī*), def in **(Catukka) Samaṇa S** (A 4.239/2:238) SD 49.14.

²⁶⁹ This is the arhat (*arahata*), def in **(Catukka) Samaṇa S** (A 4.239/2:238 f), SD 49.14.

²⁷⁰ These “outside doctrines” (*para-p,pavāda*) are the 62 wrong views (or bases for wrong views), ie, eternalism (4), partial eternalism (4), extensionism (4), endless hedging (4), fortuitous arising (2), conscious survival (16), non-conscious survival (8), neither conscious nor non-conscious survival (8), annihilationism (7), and supreme nirvana here and now (5) (MA 2:5). These 10 groups are listed in detail as the 62 bases for wrong views in **Brahma,jāla S** (D 1) + SD 25.1 (5).

²⁷¹ *Sammā*. Comy says that here *sammā* (which usu means “right, full, complete”) means “with cause, with reason” (MA 2:7).

²⁷² *Suññā para-p,pavādā samaṇehi aññe’ti* [Be:Ka Ce Ee so; Be *samaṇebhi aññehīti*], *evam etaṃ bhikkhave sammā sīha,nādam nadatha*. This first half of the sentence (ending with *aññe*) recurs in **Mahā,parinibbāna S** (D

The dharmafarer's 4 qualities

3 It is, however, possible, bhikshus, it may happen, that wanderers of other sects might speak thus: 'But, what confidence have the venerables, what power, that you venerables speak thus.'²⁷³

"Only here, there is the recluse; here, there is the second recluse; here, there is the third recluse; here, there is the fourth recluse. Empty of recluses are the other outside doctrines"?"

3.2 Bhikshus, when the wanderers of other sects speak thus, they should be answered thus:²⁷⁴

There are, avusos [friends], **these 4 qualities** declared by the Blessed One, the arhat [worthy], the fully self-awakened one who knows and sees, in which we, seeing in ourselves, say thus:

'Only here, there is the recluse; here, there is the second recluse; here, there is the third recluse; here, there is the fourth recluse. Empty of recluses are the other outside doctrines.'

3.3 What are the four?

Avusos,²⁷⁵

- | | |
|---|---|
| (1) we have confidence [faith] ²⁷⁶ in our teacher; | <i>atthi kho no āvuso satthari pasādo</i> |
| (2) we have confidence in the Dharma; | <i>atthi dhamme pasādo</i> |
| (3) we have fulfilled moral virtue; and | <i>atthi sīlesu paripūra,kāritā</i> |
| (4) our fellow dharmafarers, ²⁷⁷ both householders and renunciants, are dear and agreeable. ²⁷⁸ | <i>saha,dhammikā kho pana piyā manāpā gahaṭṭhā c'eva pabbajitā ca</i> |

These, avusos, are the 4 qualities declared by the Blessed One, the arhat, the fully self-awakened one who knows and sees, in which we, seeing in ourselves, say thus:

'Only here, there is the recluse; here, there is the second recluse; here, there is the third recluse; here, there is the fourth recluse. Empty of recluses are the other outside doctrines.'

The one goal

4 Now, bhikshus, it is possible, it may happen, that wanderers of other sects might speak thus:

'Avusos, it is so for us: we, too, have confidence in the teacher, that is *our* teacher!²⁷⁹

Avusos, it is so for us: we, too, have confidence in the Dharma, that is *our* Dharma!

Avusos, it is so for us: we, too, are accomplished in moral virtue, that is *our* moral virtue!²⁸⁰

16,5.27.3/2:151,22), SD 9. The whole sentence recurs in **(Catukka) Samaṇa S** (A 4.239/2:238,9), SD 49.14. Comy says that "other sects" are the proponents of the 62 views, who lack the 12 kinds of ascetics, viz, the 4 who have attained the fruits (*phal'atṭhaka,samaṇa*), the 4 who have attained the path (*magg'atṭhaka,samaṇa*), and the 4 working on insight (*āradḍha,vipassaka samaṇa*) to attain the respective paths (AA 3:214). Comys explain that a lion-roar is a roar of supremacy (*seṭṭha,nāda*), of fearlessness (*abhūta,nāda*), and one that cannot be countered (*appaṭināda*) (MA 2:7,7+14 = AA 2:303). On the 4 recluses, see (1.2); on the 4 recluses being unique to early Buddhism, see (1.3).

²⁷³ *Ko pan 'āyasmantānaṃ assāso kiṃ balaṃ, yena tumhe āyasmanto evaṃ vadetha.*

²⁷⁴ *Evaṃ vādino bhikkhave añña,titthiyā paribbājakā evaṃ assu vacanīyā.*

²⁷⁵ The 4 qualities (with the 3rd and 4th constituting the noble sangha) are the 3 jewels, which are laid out in full in **Vatthūpama S** (M 7), where they are the bases for meditation leading to awakening (M 7,5-10/1:37 f), SD 28.12. For details, see (2).

²⁷⁶ Here *pasāda* is a more general word (incl a secular sense) of faith (*saddhā*). Faith—viz, wise faith (*avecca-p-pasāda*): note the key component of *pasāda* here—is the first of the 5 spiritual faculties (*pañc'indriya*): see **Pañc'-indriya**, SD 10.4 esp (2.2)

²⁷⁷ On *saha,dhammikā*, see (2.1) n.

²⁷⁸ Ie, they are friendly with one another, "mixing like milk and water, looking at each other with kindly eyes ... smiling and cheerful ... their faculties clear," and also to outsiders: see **Dhamma,cetiya S** (M 89,11/1:120 f), SD 64.10; also SD 8.1 (6).

²⁷⁹ *Amhākam pi kho āvuso atthi satthari pasādo, yo amhākaṃ satthā.* Comy mentions Pūraṇa Kassapa and the others of the 6 heretical teachers (MA 2:9). In **Sāmañña,phala S** (D 2), king Ajāta,sattu mentions them and their teachings (D 2,16-32), SD 8.10.

²⁸⁰ Comy gives the examples of "moral habits" of those following the goat practice (*aja,sīla*), the cow practice (*go,sīla*), the ram practice (*meṇḍaka,sīla*) and the dog practice (*kukkura,sīla*) (MA 2:9). The cow ascetic and the dog ascetic are described in **Kukkura,vatika S** (M 57), SD 23.11.

Avusos, it is so for us: *our* fellow Dharmafarers, too, both householders and renunciants, are dear and agreeable.

4.2 So, avusos, what is the distinction, what is the disparity, **what is the difference, here, between you and us?**²⁸¹

5 Bhikshus, if the wanderers of other sects should speak thus, they should be answered thus:

‘Now, avusos, is the goal one, or is the goal many?’

Answering rightly, bhikshus, the wanderers of other sects would answer thus:

‘*The goal is one; the goal is not many.*’²⁸²

5.2 ‘But, avusos, is the goal for one with lust, or for one without lust?’

Answering rightly, bhikshus, the wanderers of other sects would answer thus:

‘The goal, avusos, is for one without lust; the goal is not for one with lust.’²⁸³ *vīta,rāga*

5.3 ‘But, avusos, is the goal for one with hate, or for one without hate?’

Answering rightly, bhikshus, the wanderers of other sects would answer thus:

‘The goal, avusos, is for one without hate; the goal is not for one with hate.’²⁸⁴ *vīta,dosa*

5.4 ‘But, avusos, is the goal for one with delusion, or for one without delusion?’

Answering rightly, bhikshus, the wanderers of other sects would answer thus:

‘The goal, avusos, is for one without delusion; the goal is not for one with delusion.’²⁸⁵ *vīta,moha*

5.5 ‘But, avusos, is the goal for one with craving, or for one without craving?’ [65]

Answering rightly, bhikshus, the wanderers of other sects would answer thus:

‘The goal, avusos, is for one without craving; the goal is not for one with craving.’²⁸⁶ *nittaṅhā*

5.6 ‘But, avusos, is the goal for one with clinging, or for one without clinging?’

Answering rightly, bhikshus, the wanderers of other sects would answer thus:

‘The goal, avusos, is for one without clinging; the goal is not for one with clinging.’²⁸⁷ *anupādāna*

5.7 ‘But, avusos, is the goal for one with vision, or for one without vision?’

Answering rightly, bhikshus, the wanderers of other sects would answer thus:

‘The goal, avusos, is for one with vision; the goal is not for one without vision.’²⁸⁸ *viddasuna*

5.8 ‘But, avusos, is the goal for one who favours and opposes,
or for one who neither favours nor opposes?’

Answering rightly, bhikshus, the wanderers of other sects would answer thus:

‘The goal, avusos, is for one who neither favours nor opposes;
the goal is not for one who favours and opposes.’²⁸⁹ *anānuruddha
appaṭiviruddha*

5.9 ‘But, avusos, is the goal for one with vision, or for one who delights
and enjoys mental proliferation, or for one who neither delights nor enjoys
mental proliferation?’²⁹⁰

²⁸¹ *Idha no āvuso ko viśeso ko adhippāyo* [Ce Ee Se so; Be *adhippayāso* (sic); vl *adhippayogo*] *kiṃ nānā,kara-*
naṃ, yad idaṃ tumhākaṃ c’eva amhākaṃ cāti. This underscored is stock: **Cūḷa Sīha,nāda S** (M 11,4.2/1:64), SD 49.2; **Bālena Paṇḍita S** (S 12.19/2:24), SD 21.2; **Sammā,sambuddha S** (S 22.58/3:65), SD 63.11; **Sall’atthena S** (S 36.6/4:208), SD 5.5; **(Akusala Mūla) Añña,titthiya S** (A 3.68/1:199), SD 16.4; **Loka,dhamma S 2** (A 8.6/4:-158), SD 42.3.

²⁸² *Kim pan’āvuso ekā niṭṭhā, udāhu puthu niṭṭhāti*. See (3.1).

²⁸³ For details, see (3.2).

²⁸⁴ For details, see (3.3).

²⁸⁵ For details, see (3.4).

²⁸⁶ For details, see (3.5).

²⁸⁷ For details, see (3.6).

²⁸⁸ For details, see (3.7).

²⁸⁹ “One who favours and opposes,” *anuruddha,paṭiviruddha*, ie, reacting to the attractive with lust, and to the un-attractive with anger. One “favours” on account of lust (*rāga*), and “opposes” on account of anger (*kodha*) (MA 2:10,23). For details, see (3.8).

²⁹⁰ “Mental proliferation” (*papañca*) refers to the mind’s habit and power of attracting thoughts and multiplying them, so that we create a very private reality for ourselves.

Answering rightly, bhikshus, the wanderers of other sects would answer thus:

‘The goal, avusos, is **for one who neither delights in nor enjoys mental proliferation**; the goal is not for one who delights in and enjoys mental proliferation.’²⁹¹

*nippapañc’ārāma
nippapañca,rati*

The 2 extreme views

6 There are these **two views**, bhikshus, that is to say, existence view and non-existence view.²⁹²

Bhikshus, those recluses or brahmins who stick to the existence view, hold on to the existence view, hang on to the existence view, are opposed to the non-existence view.²⁹³

6.2 Bhikshus, those recluses or brahmins who stick to the non-existence view, hold on to the non-existence view, hang on to the non-existence view, are also opposed to the existence view.

7 Bhikshus, those recluses or brahmins who do not understand, according to reality, the arising and the ending and the gratification and the disadvantage and the escape²⁹⁴ with regard to these two views, are those with lust, with hate, with delusion, with craving, with clinging, they are without vision, bent on favouring and opposing, enjoying and delighting in mental proliferation.

7.2 They are *not* fully free from birth, decay, death, sorrow, lamentation, suffering, grief, despair; they are not fully free from suffering,²⁹⁵ I say!

8 Bhikshus, those recluses or brahmins who understand, according to reality, the *arising*²⁹⁶ and the *ending* and the *gratification* and the *danger* and the *escape* with regard to these two views, are those without lust, without hate, without delusion, without craving, without clinging, they have vision, neither favouring nor opposing, neither enjoying nor delighting in mental proliferation.

8.2 They are *fully free* from birth, decay, death, sorrow, lamentation, suffering, grief, despair; they are fully free from suffering, I say! [66]

The 4 kinds of clinging

9 There are, bhikshus, these 4 kinds of clinging. What are the four?²⁹⁷

- | | |
|------------------------------------|----------------------------|
| (1) Clinging to sensual pleasures. | <i>kām’upādāna</i> |
| (2) Clinging to views. | <i>diṭṭh’upādāna</i> |
| (3) Clinging to rituals and vows. | <i>sīla-b, bat’upādāna</i> |
| (4) Clinging to a self-doctrine. | <i>atta, vād’upādāna</i> |

²⁹¹ For details, see (3.9).

²⁹² *Dve’ mā bhikkhave diṭṭhiyo bhava, diṭṭhi ca vibhava, diṭṭhi ca* [4.1]. Comy equates the existence view (*bhava, diṭṭhi*) with eternalism (*sassata, diṭṭhi*) and the non-existence view (*vibhava, diṭṭhi*) with annihilationism (*uccheda, diṭṭhi*) (MA 2:10,34). These 2 are, in fact, **the extreme views** that the Buddha, in **Dhamma,cakka Pavattana Sutta** (S 56.11), SD 1.1, admonishes us to avoid. Eternalism, the first extreme view, is the basis for ideas about an eternal soul and an almighty creator-God (which are, in reality, spiritually false and psychologically insidious) and encourages *self-mortification* to be rid of the impure or “sinful” body to free the “immortal” soul. Annihilationism, on the other hand, is the basis for other extreme of *self-indulgence* since this is the only life without any karma or rebirth (life after death). On “the polarization of views,” see SD 40a.1 (7.2.2).

²⁹³ *Ye hi keci bhikkhave samaṇā vā brāhmaṇā vā bhava, diṭṭhiṃ allīnā bhava, diṭṭhiṃ upagatā bhava, diṭṭhiṃ ajjhositā, vibhava, diṭṭhiyā te paṭiviruddhā.*

²⁹⁴ “Escape,” *nissaraṇa*, ie nirvana (MA 2:11).

²⁹⁵ “Suffering,” *dukkha*, here is the endless cycle (*vaṭṭa*) of rebirths and redeaths (MA 2:12). Another word for this is *saṃsāra*.

²⁹⁶ “Arising ... ending ... gratification ... danger ... escape.” [4.3]. Comy: The arising or origin (*samudaya*) of these views is rooted in 8 conditions: the 5 aggregates, ignorance, sense-contact, perception, thought, unwise attention, bad friends and another’s voice. Their ending (*aṭṭhaṅgama*) is the path of streamwinning, which (says Comy) removes all wrong views. Their gratification (*assāda*) is the apparent satisfying of our emotional needs or psychological wants they seem to give. Their danger or disadvantage (*ādīnava*) is the persistent bondage that they entail. And the escape (*nissaraṇa*) from them is nirvana. (MA 2:11). Further see **Satta-ṭ,thāna S** (S 22.57/3:62-65), SD 29.2.

²⁹⁷ The 4 views recur in (**Paṭicca,samuppāda**) **Vibhaṅga S** (S 12.2,6), SD 5.15. For details, see (4.3).

10 There are, bhikshus, certain recluses and brahmins who, although claiming to fully understand the doctrine of all clingings, do not rightly declare a **full understanding**²⁹⁸ of all the clingings.

Although they declare a full understanding of	<u>clinging to sensual pleasures,</u>
they do not declare a full understanding of	clinging to views,
nor a full understanding of	clinging to rituals and vows,
nor full understanding of	clinging to a self-doctrine.

10.2 Why is that?

These good recluses and brahmins do not understand those **three positions**, according to reality.

So, they only rightly declare a full understanding of	<i>clinging to sensual pleasures,</i>
but they do not declare a full understanding of	clinging to views,
nor a full understanding of	clinging to rituals and vows,
nor a full understanding of	clinging to a self-doctrine.

11 *There are, bhikshus, certain recluses and brahmins who, although claiming to fully understand the doctrine of all the clingings, do not rightly declare a full understanding of all the clingings.*

Although they declare a full understanding of	<u>clinging to sensual pleasures,</u>
and a full understanding of	<u>clinging to views,</u>
they declare <i>neither</i> a full understanding of	clinging to rituals and vows,
<i>nor</i> a full understanding of	clinging to a self-doctrine.

11.2 Why is that?

These good recluses and brahmins do not understand those **two positions**, according to reality.

So, they only rightly declare a full understanding of	<i>clinging to sensual pleasures,</i>
and a full understanding of	<i>clinging to views,</i>
but they declare <i>neither</i> a full understanding of	clinging to rituals and vows,
<i>nor</i> a full understanding of	clinging to a self-doctrine.

12 *There are, bhikshus, certain recluses and brahmins who, although claiming to fully understand the doctrine of all the clingings, do not rightly declare a full understanding of all the clingings.*

Although they declare a full understanding of	<u>clinging to sensual pleasures,</u>
a full understanding of	<u>clinging to views,</u>
and full understanding of	<u>clinging to rituals and vows,</u>
but they do not declare a full understanding of	clinging to a self-doctrine.

12.2 Why is that?

These good recluses and brahmins do not understand this **one position**, according to reality.

So, they only rightly declare a full understanding of	<i>clinging to sensual pleasures,</i>
a full understanding of	<i>clinging to views,</i>
and a full understanding of	<i>clinging to rituals and vows,</i>
but they do not declare a full understanding of	clinging to a self-doctrine. ²⁹⁹

How the Dharma-Vinaya is taught

13 Bhikshus, in such a teaching and discipline [Dharma-Vinaya],
the confidence in the teacher has *not* been rightly pointed out,³⁰⁰

²⁹⁸ Comy explains full understanding (*pariññā*) here as the overcoming, transcending (*samatikkama*), with regard to the commentarial notion of “full understanding as abandonment” (*pahāna, pariññā*) (MA 1:29). On the 3 types of full understanding (*pariññā*)—those of the known (*ñāta, pariññā*), by scrutinization (*tīraṇa, pariññā*), and of abandonment (*pahāna, pariññā*), see [4.3.5].

²⁹⁹ Other religions may have a full understanding about clinging to sensual pleasures, or to views, or to rituals and vows, but none, except for the Buddha, has full understanding about clinging to a self-doctrine. In fact, most of them teach some kind of self-doctrine, such as that of an eternal soul. Since the other religions lack a full understanding of clinging to a self-doctrine, their claims to have full understanding of the other three kinds of clinging are unfounded.

³⁰⁰ *Yo satthari pasādo so na samma-g, gato akkhāyati*. “Not fully [rightly] accomplished,” *na samma-g, gato* (from *samma*, “fully, rightly” + *gata*, “gone,” meaning “proceeded, accomplished”), hence, *samma-g, gata* (BHS)

the confidence in the teaching	has <i>not</i> been rightly pointed out;
the fulfillment of moral virtue	has <i>not</i> been rightly pointed out;
the dear and agreeable state in fellow dharmafarers	has <i>not</i> been rightly pointed out.

13.2 What is the reason for this?³⁰¹

That is how it is, bhikshus, when [67] the teaching and discipline are badly shown, badly expounded, not leading to liberation,³⁰² not bringing about stillness, not declared by one fully self-awakened.³⁰³

14 But, bhikshus, when the Tathagata, the arhat, fully self-awakened one, claiming to fully understand the doctrine of all the clings, does *rightly* declare a full understanding of all the clings,³⁰⁴

he declares a full understanding of	clinging to sensual pleasures,
he declares a full understanding of	clinging to views,
he declares a full understanding of	clinging to rituals and vows,
he declares a full understanding of	clinging to a self-doctrine.

15 Indeed, bhikshus, in such a teaching and discipline,

the confidence that is shown to the teacher	has been <i>rightly</i> pointed out; ³⁰⁵
the confidence in the teaching	has been <i>rightly</i> pointed out;
the fulfillment of moral virtue	has been <i>rightly</i> pointed out;
the dear and agreeable state in fellow dharmafarers	has been <i>rightly</i> pointed out.

15.2 What is the reason for this?

That is how it is, bhikshus, when the teaching and discipline are well shown [well-taught], well expounded, leading to liberation, bringing about stillness,³⁰⁶ declared by one fully self-awakened.³⁰⁷

Dependent arising³⁰⁸

16 And, bhikshus, regarding **these 4 kinds of clinging**:³⁰⁹

samyag,gata, Divy 399) means “fully or rightly attained, perfect,” of an arhat (D 1:55; S 1:76; A 1:269, 4:226, 5:265; It 87); also *sammā,gata* (V 2:203,17). Comy glosses it as “one who has practised rightly, such as the Buddha” (*samma-g,gatāti sammā paṭipannā buddh’ādayo*, SA 1:146; cf ItA 2:102).

³⁰¹ See (4.4).

³⁰² Comy, echoing the suttas—eg **Lohicca S** (D 12,10 etc) + SD 34.8 (3)—says those with wrong view would be reborn as animals. Those teachers teaching wrong views would end up as hell-wardens (*niraya,pāla*) and their followers as hell-beings, and so on (MA 2:13 f). The lesson of such symbolic language is clear: both false teachers and their follower end up in the karmic beds of thorns they have made for themselves.

³⁰³ *Evam h’etaṃ bhikkhave hoti, yathā taṃ durakkhāte dhamma,vinaye duppavedite aniyyānike anupāsama,samvattanike asammā,sambuddha-p,pavedite.*

³⁰⁴ Comy says that the Buddha teaches with full understanding of abandoning the clinging that is sensual desire by way of the path of arhathood. The other three clings—that is views, rituals and vows, and self-doctrine—are abandoned by the path of streamwinning. (MA 2:16). Technically, these latter are the 3 fetters of self-view (*sakkāya,diṭṭhi*), attachment to rituals and vows (*sīla-b,bata parāmāsa*) and doubt (*vicikicchā*), breaking which we become streamwinners: see **Emotional independence**, SD 40a.8. “Views” (*diṭṭhi*), in its broadest senses, includes the notions that fuel our inclinations that are the remaining 7 mental fetters. Only the arhat has overcome all the 10 fetters: see SD 11.1 (5.1) & SD 3.3 (2).

³⁰⁵ “Not fully [rightly] accomplished,” *na samma-g,gato* (from *samma*, “fully, rightly” + *gata*, “gone,” meaning “proceeded, accomplished”), hence, *samma-g,gata* (BHS *samyag,gata*, Divy 399) means “fully or rightly attained, perfect,” of an arhat (D 1:55; S 1:76; A 1:269, 4:226, 5:265; It 87); also *sammā,gata* (V 2:203,17). Comy glosses it as “one who has practised rightly, such as the Buddha” (*samma-g,gatāti sammā paṭipannā buddh’ādayo*, SA 1:146; cf ItA 2:102).

³⁰⁶ Through the stilling (ie, uprooting) of lust, ill will and ignorance, the 3 main roots that are the latent tendencies: see MA 2:15,4.

³⁰⁷ *Evam h’etaṃ bhikkhave hoti, yathā taṃ svākkhāte dhamma,vinaye suppvadedite niyyānike upāsama,samvattanike sammā,sambuddha-p,pavedite.*

³⁰⁸ For notes, see (4.5).

³⁰⁹ The passage [§16] shows the dependent arising of clinging, tracing its roots back to ignorance, while §17 shows how, by the destruction of ignorance, clinging is abandoned. See (4.5).

- what is their source, what is their cause,³¹⁰ what is their birth, what is their origin?³¹¹
- (1) These 4 kinds of clinging have **craving**
as their source, craving as their cause, craving as their birth, craving as their origin.³¹²
And this craving:
what is its source, what is its cause, what is its birth, what is its origin?
- (2) Craving has **feeling** as its source, feeling as its cause, feeling as its birth, feeling as its origin.³¹³
And this feeling:
what is its source, what is its cause, what is its birth, what is its origin?
- (3) Feeling has **contact** as its source, contact as its cause, contact as its birth, contact as its origin.³¹⁴
And this contact:
what is its source, what is its cause, what is its birth, what is its origin?
- (4) Contact has **the 6 sense-bases** as their source, the 6 sense-bases as their cause, the 6 sense-bases as their birth, the 6 sense-bases as their origin.³¹⁵
And these 6 sense-bases:
what is their source, what is their cause, what is their birth, what is their origin?
- (5) The 6 sense-bases have **name-and-form** as their source, name-and-form as their cause, name-and-form as their birth, name-and-form as their origin.³¹⁶
And this name-and-form:
what is their source, what is their cause, what is their birth, what is their origin?
- (6) Name-and-form have **consciousness** as their source, consciousness as their cause, consciousness as their birth, consciousness as their origin.³¹⁷
And this consciousness:
what is its source, what is its cause, what is its birth, what is its origin?
- (7) Consciousness has **formations** as its source, formations as its cause, formations as its birth, formations as its origin.³¹⁸
And these formations:
what is their source, what is their cause, what is their birth, what is their origin?
- (8) Formations have **ignorance** as their source, ignorance as their cause, ignorance as their birth, ignorance as their origin.³¹⁹

Dependent ending of clinging

17 And, bhikkhus, when *ignorance* is abandoned, **true knowledge**³²⁰ arises.
With the fading away of ignorance and the arising of true knowledge,³²¹

³¹⁰ Although *samudaya* is best tr as “arising,” esp in connection with the 4 truths, here, with the 4 key words used in a non-technical sense, it simply means “from what does it arise?” Hence, “cause,” in a non-technical sense, helps to keep the smooth aesthetic flow of the sentence.

³¹¹ *Ime ca bhikkhave cattāro upādānā kiṃ, nidānā kiṃ, samudayā kiṃ, jātikā kiṃ, pabhavā.* The word-series, “source, ... cause, ... birth, ... origin” (*nidānā ... samudayā ... jātikā ... pabhavā*) are also used in **Mahā Niddesa** comy on mental proliferation (*papañca*) at Sn 874d: see SD 6.14 (3.3.3.4), which is here [§16] elaborated in terms of dependent arising.

³¹² See (4.5.1)

³¹³ See (4.5.2)

³¹⁴ See (4.5.3)

³¹⁵ See (4.5.4)

³¹⁶ See (4.5.5)

³¹⁷ See (4.5.6)

³¹⁸ See (4.5.7)

³¹⁹ See (4.5.8)

³²⁰ “True knowledge.” *vijjā*, ie the knowledge of the way to arhathood (MA 2:18). See (4.5.9).

³²¹ *Avijjā, virāgā vijj’uppādā:* With this, one is an arhat who rises above all karma, bad or good or imperturbable (formless realm karma) (S 12.51,13; VbhA 146; Vism 17.64/532 for details). This is a stock phrase: **Jana,vasabha**

he clings *not* to the clinging that is sensual pleasure,³²²
 he clings *not* to the clinging that is views,
 he clings *not* to the clinging that is attachment to rituals and vows,
 he clings *not* to the clinging that is self-doctrine.

Without *clinging*, there is no agitation,³²³ without agitation, he surely himself attains **nirvana**.³²⁴

18 He understands.

‘Birth is destroyed.

The holy life has been lived.

Done what needs to be done.

There is no more of this state!’

khīṇā jāti

vusitaṃ brahmacariyaṃ

kataṃ karaṇīyaṃ

nāparaṃ itthattāyāti pajānātīti [68]

19 The Blessed One said this. The monks approved of the Blessed One’s with a joyful heart.

— evaṃ —

[For **Bibliography**, see end of SD 49]

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S (D 18,25/2:215×2), SD 62.3; **Cūḷa Sīha,nāda S** (M 11,17/1:67), SD 49.2; **Mahā Vedalla S** (M 43,17/1:294), SD 30.2; **Parivīmaṃsana S** (S 12.51,13/2:82), SD 11.5; **Samanupassanā S** (S 22.47,7.2/3:47, self-identity views overcome), SD 26.12; **Vappa S** (A 4.195/2:196, 197, 198), SD 77.12.

³²² This sentence, *so ... n’eva kām’upādānaṃ upādiyati*, significantly points to the fact that it is the clinging (*upādāna*) that makes *sensual pleasures* suffering, that is, it is “fuel” (*upādāna*) for itself—like the uroboros, the snake that unwittingly and painfully feeds on itself. Interestingly, in Pali, *upādāna* is the object of its own verb, which is reflected here, where *kām’upādāna* is taken as a karmadharaya (a descriptive cpd).

³²³ The subtlest form of this “agitation” (*paritassanā*) is called (mental) restlessness (*uddhacca*), or more specifically, “Dharma restlessness” (*dhamm’uddhacca*), which is found even in a non-returner: see (4.5.9.4); also SD 41.5 (5); SD 32.7 (2.1.4, 2.2.3); SD 41.4 (2.2.1).

³²⁴ *Anupādiyaṃ na paritassati, aparitassam paccattañ,ñeva parinibbāyati*. On *paccattam yeva parinibbāyati*, cf **Cūḷa Taṇhā.saṅkhaya S** (M 37,3/1:251 f, by fully understanding “the all, *sabba*”), SD 54.8; **Pacālā S** (A 7.58/4:88, by contemplating “nothing is worth clinging to”), SD 4.11. Comy says that he brings himself to nirvana (ie by his own efforts) by the utter extinction of defilements (*sayam eva kilesa,parinibbānena parinibbāyati*, MA 2:18, 299).